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Tel Aviv readies for Hussein's royal visit

Massive security measures will gridlock city



An IDF soldier at Sde Dov Airport prepares the red carpet for the arrival of King Hussein. The helicopter will touch down there today. (IDF Spokesman)

TEL AVIV, Israel's "city which never stops," is expected to grind to a virtual standstill this afternoon as Jordan's King Hussein pays his first public visit. Some 6,000 policemen, special forces, GSS officers, and snipers, aided by helicopters, will guard the routes to be taken by the royal visitor.

Several main thoroughfares, including Ibn Gvirol, Arlosorov, and Shaul Hamelech, will be closed intermittently from early morning until the king departs in the evening. Parking will be forbidden along all roads to be taken by the motorcade, and vehicles will be towed away. (Story, Page 2)

"I would truly advise anyone who doesn't have to be in Tel Aviv [this] afternoon to stay away," Police chief Assaf Hefetz told Israel Radio.

The streets of Tel Aviv have been decorated with the flags of Jordan and Israel, but most of the city's residents will view the Jordanian monarch only from their TV screens.

"We are very excited," Mayor Ronni Milo said last night in an Israel TV interview. "We have decorated the city and cleaned the streets... but citizens will not be allowed on those roads where the guests are going to drive. I hope the visit will be a success."

BATSHEVA TSUR

Jordanian Ambassador Marwan Muasher played down political expectations from the one-day visit.

"The fact that this is his majesty's first visit to Tel Aviv does not mean there are new political developments that warranted the visit," Muasher told Reuters. He said the visit had been planned before prime minister Yitzhak Rabin was assassinated.

"I think Jordan's relationship with Israel is going in a very healthy manner," Muasher said. "Initially there were exaggerations from both sides on the popular level. Jordanians expected immediate benefits, and Israelis expected quick normalization in all aspects. The expectations are now giving way to more realistic approaches," he said.

At 2:30 p.m., the monarch, accompanied by several senior cabinet ministers, will arrive at Sde Dov Airport, where he will be greeted by Prime Minister Shimon Peres and be received with full military honors.

Following the ceremony, the motorcade will travel to Ichilov Hospital, where Hussein's first stop will be the neurosurgery department, where two Jordanian soldiers are hospitalized. Later he will attend the signing ceremony of the foundation scroll for the Yitzhak Rabin Trauma Center, a ceremony also to be attended by Leah Rabin, Health Minister Efraim Sneh, and Milo.

The motorcade will travel through the flag-bedecked streets of Tel Aviv to the Defense Ministry, where Hussein and Peres will confer at 5:00 p.m.

Later in the evening the two will fly to Beirut where they will be joined by US Secretary of State Warren Christopher.

Christopher has moved up his visit to Israel and Syria. He will arrive in the morning and confer with Peres. The three leaders are also expected to hold a meeting at the Peace Room in Beit Givri, following the awarding of a peace prize to former cabinet secretary Judge Elyakim Rubinstein and Jordanian Ambassador to the US Fayed Tarawneh.

The king will return to Jordan after dinner.

MK Emanuel Zissman (Labor) sent a telegram to King Hussein yesterday asking him to combine a visit to Jerusalem and the Knesset with his visit here. Zissman expressed surprise that the Jordanians had not taken the initiative. "The peace treaty with Jordan includes recognition of Jerusalem as the capital," Zissman said.

Saudi Foreign Minister Crown Prince Saud Faisal visited Amman yesterday. Observers said the two countries have buried the hatchet between them since Jordan supported Iraq in the Gulf War. The timing of the visit—the day before Hussein's second visit to Israel—was seen as significant. *Liat Collins contributed to this report.*

MONEY MAGAZINE

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Ouman workers protest following dismissals

MICHAEL YUDELMAN

SCORES of angry workers from Ofakim's Polgat-owned Ouman textile company demonstrated yesterday for hours outside Tel Aviv's headquarters of Clal, Polgat's mother company.

The workers protested Polgat's decision to close down Ouman and of its issuing 190 dismissal notices yesterday morning, following the breakdown of negotiations with Ouman's management the previous night.

A cordon of dozens of policemen confronted the workers outside Clal House and prevented them from bursting into the building.

The Histadrut, which is backing the workers, had promised the participation of several unions to show solidarity in the demonstration, but they failed to appear and the Ouman workers were left alone in their protest.

Histadrut executive member Binyamin Gonen blasted the other unions' failure to show up, saying he would demand taking personal measures against those who had promised to come.

"This is a severe shortcoming and reflects the weakness of the unions and the Histadrut," Gonen said.

Ouman's union heads, headed by Histadrut executive members Michel Elmaliyah and MK Yossi Vanunu, requested a meeting with Clal managers, but were denied.

Histadrut executive member MK Shmuel Avital said yesterday that "Polgat has secretly sold Ouman's machines and equipment, and intends today to ask the court for an evacuation order of the workers from the plant premises, to enable moving the machines out of there."

Avital said that a month and a half before the closure, Ouman's management took steps to slow down the production. He said he received authorized information that Polgat and Ouman had signed a deal to sell the plant's equipment, and that one of the purchasers is a Gaza resident.

Polgat manager Moti Baron firmly denied reports of selling the plant or its equipment.

Ouman's management yesterday accused the Histadrut of sabotaging the negotiations the previous night between the workers and management, and of not canceling the demonstration.

Syria and Israel prepare to resume talks Jan. 21

Christopher arrives today for consultations

TALKS between Israel and Syria will resume on January 21, diplomatic sources in Damascus revealed yesterday. Israel Radio also reported that the two sides will reconvene, but the location has yet to be decided.

US Secretary of State Warren Christopher will arrive here today for the first leg of a shuttle diplomacy mission between Israel and Syria, during which he will meet with Syrian President Hafez Assad and Prime Minister Shimon Peres.

Christopher is expected to obtain agreement from Assad and Peres of the progress made by negotiators at the recent Maryland talks.

An editorial in the Syrian daily *Al-Thawra* said Christopher can expect "fruitful and serious cooperation" from the Syrian leadership. "In exchange, Syria is anticipating similar readiness from the Israeli side."

"The climate is suitable for achieving further positive steps that serve the peace process," *Al-Thawra* said, without elaborating. "There is now a significant and precious chance to achieve substantial progress on the Syrian track."

DAVID RUDGE and Itim

Christopher will try on this trip to persuade President Hafez Assad to raise the level of negotiations.

Foreign Minister Ehud Barak is expected in Washington on January 20, the day before the peace talks resume, and Christopher wants Assad to send his foreign minister, Farouk Shara, US diplomatic sources told AP.

Israel's negotiators—Foreign Ministry Director-General Uri Savir, Ambassador to the US Itamar Rabinovich, and Yoel Singer—have already updated Peres on the developments at the talks. They relayed their impression that the Syrians are now more open to negotiations and are willing to discuss specifics relating to the nations' future relations.

After the talks, Peres said the main area of contention is now over the "essence of the peace," or the extent of normalization.

Assad has already agreed to forming diplomatic ties with Israel before withdrawal from the Golan is complete. However, according to the report given to Peres, Syria is

not willing to agree to the level of normalization sought by Israel.

Christopher is expected to try to obtain an agreement from Israel and Syria that each would include an army officer and an economist in the next round of negotiations.

Christopher will also try to get further clarifications on the subject of normalization with Israel.

The sides are reportedly planning to discuss water issues when talks resume.

Only an agreement with Syria can solve the problem of south Lebanon and security along the northern border, Interior Minister Haim Ramon told reporters during a tour of the north yesterday.

"The problem of south Lebanon is difficult and complex. Successive governments have tried virtually all military means, but we didn't succeed in destroying centers of terror and violence in south Lebanon," said Ramon.

"I very much hope that in the framework of an agreement with Syria we will succeed in finding a political solution that will bring peace to this region," he said.

Senior defense figure accepts post as GSS chief

ON LEVY, LIAT COLLINS, and BILL HUTMAN

A SENIOR defense establishment figure last night told Prime Minister Shimon Peres that he accepted the appointment to succeed "K" as head of the General Security Service.

If the appointment is approved, the new GSS head is expected to take up the post in the next few days.

"K," who offered his resignation Monday, told Peres he would stay on the job until a replacement can take over. K. told the Knesset subcommittee on special services yesterday that Prime Minister Shimon Peres would decide when he should leave.

The prime minister began consultations yesterday in search of a successor to K. The two principal candidates for the job were reportedly former OC Navy Adm. (res.) Ami Ayalon and OC Central Command Maj.-Gen. Ilan Biran.

Ayalon declined to answer whether Peres had offered him the post. Asked whether he was struggling with a decision, Ayalon replied: "I struggle all my life." Sources close to Ayalon said that he has come under considerable pressure in recent days to accept the post.

Biran was also considered a strong candidate, being a recognized expert on terrorism and having a close working knowledge of Judea and Samaria.

In an unusual move, K. his face obscured, granted a brief interview to Channel 1's parliamentary reporter outside the meeting. He said he is not concerned about the findings of the Shamgar Commission of Inquiry into Yitzhak Rabin's assassination, or about his identity becoming known.

He refused to comment on how he has been

treated by the commission. "I don't want to say anything about the commission to the press. I'll say what I have to say to the commission," he said.

On the condition of the service, K. said: "The GSS is excellent. It's strong. Nothing will happen to it. This body is too strong, too stable, and too professional for anything to happen to it."

He did not say what his future plans are.

Asked whether he believes the name of the GSS heads should be disclosed in the future, K. replied: "I gave my answer to the prime minister," but refused to say what the answer was. He said his own face would not be revealed to the public in the near future.

Members of the subcommittee expressed regret at K.'s resignation.

Meanwhile, the deputy chief of the GSS testified for over two hours yesterday before the Shamgar Commission in defense of his boss.

The deputy chief, R., outlined the steps K. had taken before Rabin's assassination in response to the threat that Jewish extremists would attack the prime minister or some other senior official, sources close to the commission said.

R. was asked to testify by K., who after being issued a warning letter by the commission last month is entitled to bring witnesses to speak in his defense.

R.'s testimony was considered particularly important, as he was acting GSS head the night of the assassination, because K. was out of the country.

No commission hearings are scheduled for today, with hearings to resume tomorrow.

Russia stops talks with Chechen gunmen

MOSCOW—Russian authorities broke off talks with Chechen gunmen yesterday after they killed two hostages held in a hospital in Russia's North Caucasus, an Interior Ministry spokesman said.

The Moscow-based spokesman gave no further details. Itar-Tass news agency, in an earlier report

News agencies

about 2,000 hostages, and began battling Russian troops in the streets.

In Moscow, the attack prompted President Boris Yeltsin to call an emergency session of security chiefs in the Kremlin and brought renewed appeals from critics to end the unpopular war. (Full story, Page 4)

Donors pledge \$1.37b in aid to Palestinians

DONOR nations pledged \$1.37 billion in aid to the Palestinian Authority yesterday, in a political boost to PLO leader Yasser Arafat two weeks before the first elections in the Gaza Strip and West Bank.

A serious diplomatic incident occurred just before the signing of the aid agreement. The Palestinians rejected Article 5 of the document, which recognizes Israel's right to take whatever measures necessary in order to guarantee security, referring to the closure imposed on the territory after the assassination of Ythye Ayyash.

After having made the protest, Arafat agreed to sign the document, adding his comments on the problematic article.

The money pledged for new development projects was beyond the Palestinians' expectations. They received \$865 million over their requested \$550m. The rest of the funds, \$500m., were committed previously but not yet disbursed. The money will be disbursed between January 1996 and March 1997.

"Without the assistance from our brother countries, our friends, we would have been

ELDAD BECK and agencies
 PARIS

unable to continue along the road to a just peace," said Arafat, who had appealed for \$1.3b. "This will first of all strengthen our democracy. All our infrastructure has been destroyed and we are starting from zero, from below zero," he added.

French Foreign Minister Herve de Charrette told a news conference that some 50 donor countries and organizations had pledged the total at the one-day conference, which drew so many participants that "we had difficulty seating them all."

The European Union remained the most generous donor, with \$120m. The World Bank pledged \$90m. and the United States \$71m. The EU funds a major slice of the running costs of the PA.

Foreign Minister Ehud Barak said Israel, which had allocated almost \$300m. in the past 18 months to the Palestinians, "will continue to play its part in future."

Barak and Arafat held an hour-long mid-

night meeting Monday night, but did not discuss the killing of Ayyash.

"We did not discuss this matter," said Arafat, who only on Sunday had accused Israel of killing "the martyr" Ayyash in violation of the Israel-PLO peace accords.

"It really wasn't mentioned, and I think that shows correct judgment on the chairman's part that it would not have been right to discuss these things," Barak said. "It was wise, and shows his concentration on the main issue, which is to obtain the backing of donor countries for the big effort which the Palestinian Authority is making to stand on its own feet economically."

The Palestinians, Israel and donors also signed a tripartite agreement governing the finances of the future Palestinian government. Under the accord, Israel will commit itself to supporting and facilitating economic development. Israel is to transfer tax revenues collected from Palestinians during its administration of the territories and to exempt imported Palestinian capital goods from customs duty.

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 Dr. Henri Rothschild, President, Canada-Israel Industrial Research and Development Foundation
 Mr. Zohar Perl, Assistant Director, Ministry of Trade and Industry
 Dr. Gabriella Cohen, Ministry of Trade and Industry

The meeting will take place on Sunday, January 14, 1996, at 5 p.m. at the Sheraton Hotel, 115 Hayarkon St., Tel Aviv.

Those wishing to attend should contact the Israel-Canada Chamber of Commerce by phone at 03-6202544, or by fax to 03-6202513.

The event is sponsored by Bank Leumi.



Israel will release 1,200 Palestinian prisoners over next five days

ON LEVY

ISRAEL will release 1,200 Palestinian prisoners over the next five days - ahead of Palestinian general elections - following a decision by the Ministerial Committee on Prisoner Releases.

"The release of the prisoners is likely to bring about a relaxation of tensions in the territories after the murder of Yihye Ayyash," a senior IDF source said.

Hisham Abdel Razek, head of the Palestinian team negotiating prisoner releases with Israel, met last night with IDF officials to agree on a schedule.

Two-hundred prisoners are to be released this morning into the Gaza Strip at the Nahal Oz crossing, and 600 others will be set free at Israeli-Palestinian Authority liaison offices in the West Bank.

Tomorrow, 100 Palestinians convicted of murdering collaborators and given life sentences are to be released at Nahal Oz, and another

100 in the West Bank.

On Monday, 90 prisoners who committed other crimes will be transferred to the PA in Jericho, while 40 will be released to Gaza.

The release was agreed to in the Oslo 2 accord.

"The release of prisoners will have a very positive impact on people, especially before elections," Abdel Razek told The Associated Press. The vote is scheduled for January 20.

MK Avner Shaki (National Religious Party) said "the imminent release of 1,000 murderous prisoners is just too much."

"I'm calling on the prime minister to stop the release of those who murdered their own people because the murderers of collaborators will not prevent the murder of Jews. Once a murderer, always a murderer."

Liat Collins contributed to this report.

Tel Aviv royally sealed for King Hussein's visit

Streets to be closed; vehicles will be towed

RAINE MARCUS and DAVID RUDGE

Sderot David Hamelech.

From 10 a.m. the following streets will be closed to traffic: Ibn Gvirol; Arlosorov; Weizmann; David Hamelech; and Shaul Hamelech. Parts of these streets will be opened and closed alternately during the day, but police advise drivers to use other routes, since the exact times are still not known. Changes will be broadcast on the radio.

Ichilov Hospital will virtually close for the day. Outpatient clinics will not accept patients, with the exception of the Dana children's ward and rehabilitation clinics. Entrance to the two open clinics will be through Rehov Henrietta Szold only.

The hospital's emergency ward will be open for "extreme emergencies" only.

Operations will be conducted as usual, the hospital spokesman said. However, recovered patients may only be released before 10 a.m. or after 5:30 p.m.

Relatives and friends of patients will be banned from visiting from 6 a.m., except for visitors to the Dana and rehabilitation clinics.

The Yitzhak Rabin memorial will be unveiled at the hospital is constructed from stone and glass; stone from the Jerusalem hills meant to express warmth and glass to express cold - contradiction and acceptance.

Stringent security measures will also be in force in the Tzema area for the visit by Hussein and Prime Minister Shimon Peres to Beit Gavriel at Lake Kinneret this evening. Prizes are to be awarded to Elyakim Rubinstein and his Jordanian counterpart, Faysal Tarawneh, for their contributions to achieving the peace treaty between Jordan and Israel.

Rubinstein, now a judge, and Tarawneh, now Jordan's ambassador to Washington, both led their respective delegations in the peace talks between the two countries. They are each to receive a cash prize of \$25,000 from the Gabriel Sherover Foundation. The presentations were to have taken place on November 7, but were postponed following the Rabin assassination.

More than 700 police, as well as other security forces, will be on duty and roads in the vicinity of Beit Gavriel will be closed from this afternoon until the conclusion of the event later tonight.

TEL AVIV will practically become a "closed zone" today due to blanket security for the visit of Jordan's King Hussein. Major roads will be closed for much of the day, until Hussein leaves for Beit Gavriel on the shores of the Kinneret for a peace award ceremony.

At Ichilov Hospital the king will visit two Jordanian soldiers in the neurosurgical ward before inaugurating a new trauma wing, named in memory of Yitzhak Rabin.

From early afternoon the area surrounding the hospital will be sealed off. Parking of all vehicles, including bicycles and mopeds, will be banned from 8 a.m. until 7 p.m.

Vehicles parked in the following areas will be towed away: Ibn Gvirol Street, from Reading to Dizengoff-Kaplan junction; Sderot Rokach, from the Eliezer Bridge to Derech Namir, including parking lots in the Sportek area; Derech Namir from Rehov Haim Lebanon to the Tnuva-Shaul Hamelech junction; Rehov Arlosorov, from Derech Namir to Ibn Gvirol; Rehov Weizmann from Arlosorov to Sderot Shaul Hamelech; Saul Hamelech from Derech Namir to Ibn Gvirol; and

High Court declines to rule on collaborator case

EVELYN GORDON

THE High Court of Justice yesterday rejected a petition by two collaborators seeking to block the release, under the Oslo 2 agreement, of Arab's imprisoned for killing other Arabs.

The justices declined to rule on the merits of the case, on the grounds it is a political issue.

The petition was filed by Avi Mashariki and Arif Jabar, who both assisted the General Security Service for several years, and an organization for promoting the status of collaborators, of which they are the founders.

Mashariki is a convert to Judaism.

Israel has promised to release some 1,200 Arab prisoners this

week, prior to the elections for the Palestinian Authority council.

Justice Minister David Liba'i has said these releases will not include anyone convicted of either killing or seriously wounding an Israeli.

However, press reports have stated that those to be released do include Arabs convicted of killing their fellow Arabs, generally because they were suspected of collaboration with Israel.

Attorney Naftali Werzberger, representing the petitioners, argued that this is illegal, because the interim agreement with the

PLO specifically states that only prisoners "not involved in [causing] death or serious injury" would be released.

In addition, he said, the state has repeated this promise to the High Court in response to petitions against previous prisoner releases.

Therefore, he said, the state would be violating both its agreement and its promises to the court by releasing prisoners who murdered collaborators.

In addition, he said, by releasing murderers of Arabs while it refuses to release murderers of Jews, the government is stating

that Arab lives are less valuable than Jewish lives.

To determine the length of a man's sentence by the nationality of his victim is a clear violation of Israel's basic legal principles, which prevent discrimination due to national origin, he said.

Finally, he argued, releasing prisoners who killed collaborators sends the message that this is an acceptable thing to do, and will therefore encourage more killings.

However, Justices Eliezer Goldberg, Ya'acov Kedmi, and Dalia Dorner ruled that the prisoner release is a political issue, and that therefore the court could not get involved.

PA issues warrant for suspect in death of Ayyash

JON IMMANUEL

THE Palestinian Authority yesterday issued an arrest warrant for Kamal Hamad, a contractor suspected of passing a booby-trapped cellular phone to terrorist Yihye Ayyash, and preventive security police raided his house searching for evidence that would show he was linked to Israeli intelligence.

"I issued an arrest warrant to all police stations, checkpoints and border points in Gaza and the West Bank," PA Attorney-General Khalid al-Kidrah said.

He said no request had been made for extradition "because we don't know where he is and have not yet finished our investigations. But we know that Israel is responsible for this offense because they have declared it on TV and radio."

Al-Kidrah said that other suspects were being held but no one has yet been charged.

Yesterday, Palestinian election candidates in Gaza streamed to the mourning tent for Ayyash erected outside the Palestine Mosque. In Bethlehem Hamas held a rally in Manger Square, placing Hamas signs and slogans over the walls and almost obscuring the two-story picture of Yasser Arafat opposite the police station.

Palestinian observers said much of the official mourning for Ayyash is a clear attempt to maintain national unity before the elections, following the shock of Ayyash's assassination.

Israeli security sources confirmed that the danger of Hamas-Fatah violence exists and there had been some incidents. On Monday night, shots were fired at the Gaza home of Imad Falouji, a former Hamas official, who is running in the elections on the Fatah ticket, they said.



'I intend to win the next election,' Prime Minister Shimon Peres tells visiting Jewish members of parliament and ministers yesterday, as conference chairman Yitzhak Herzog looks on. (Issac Harari)

Experts on fighting antisemitism advise Amman on dealing with anti-Moslem feeling

BATSHEVA TSUR

A GROUP of members of the Interparliamentary Council to Combat Antisemitism recently visited Jordan as guests of Crown Prince Hassan to advise the Jordanians on setting up a similar body to counteract anti-Moslem feelings in Europe.

Ame Melchior, a Jewish member of the Danish Parliament who was part of the Christian-Jewish delegation, said that Hassan and some Jordanian parliamentarians were also members of the council, which has 1,200 members from more than 80 countries.

The group, headed by British MP Greville Janner, spent two

days in Amman advising their Jordanian counterparts, he said.

The Jordanians said they were disturbed because of the image in the western world of Moslems as fundamentalists and terrorists.

"Some Moslems are like some Jews and some Christians, but we don't want people to generalize about Moslems," they said.

Melchior, a former minister in the Danish government and son of the former chief rabbi, is attending the conference of Jewish ministers and MPs being held in Jerusalem under the auspices of

the Israeli Forum, the Foreign Ministry and the Knesset.

"There are anti-Moslem feelings even in Denmark, which is relatively tolerant and where religion does not play a great role," Melchior said. "Some Danes claim they will destroy Christianity in Denmark."

He said it was ironic that he, as a Jew, had to defend the 100,000-strong Moslem community, many of whom are refugees from Bosnia or people who have fled from fundamentalist regimes like Pakistan, Iran and Iraq. In Denmark, there are 5,000 registered members of the Jewish community.

EU official: Israel hampering Palestinian candidates

JON IMMANUEL

THE chief European Union observer of the Palestinian election process said yesterday that Israel's restriction of movement could interfere with the election campaign.

"Freedom of movement for candidates and people supporting them is of utmost importance," said Carl Lidbom, a former social democratic Justice Minister in Sweden.

Meanwhile, the Israeli group Peace Watch, which has been granted observer status, reported that members of the Palestinian Central Election Commission (CEC) as well as Palestinian

monitors have been stopped at roadblocks into Jerusalem for more than an hour "despite the fact that they have Israeli VIP passes."

The roadblock restrictions have followed the intensified security measures imposed after the killing of arch-terrorist Yihye Ayyash on Friday and the calls by Islamic radicals for revenge against Israel.

Three CEC members were stopped at A-Ram checkpoint in northern Jerusalem on Monday and Naseef Muallem, chief Palestinian monitor, was stopped at the Bethlehem checkpoint in southern Jerusalem Sunday, and his documents rudely dismissed as worthless by the soldiers there, Peace Watch said.

"It might be that Israelis are worried about security... but they

have to make the necessary exceptions ... to allow elections," Lidbom told a meeting with the foreign press.

Domestic observers are supposed to be allowed "to travel through Israel" according to list drawn up by the CEC.

Shlomo Dror, the spokesman for the government coordinator in the territories, said that Israel had not received a list.

"We live in an era of passes. Just because the CEC issues a permit to any of 1,500 observers does not mean the recipient is not a security risk. There is a bilateral election committee which decides these things. If Samiha Khalil [a presidential candidate] who has not requested a permit, were to try to enter Jerusalem without the proper permit soldiers would laugh at her," Dror said.

Golan residents against withdrawal declare 'state of emergency'

DAVID RUDGE

THE Golan Residents Committee yesterday declared a "state of emergency" over the political situation, amid growing concern over the possibility of an agreement between Israel and Syria that would require a full withdrawal from the Golan Heights.

Committee spokesman Uri Heimer issued a rallying call to all those opposed to a pullout to "come to the Golan."

The call was answered almost immediately by leaders of opposition parties, as well as heads of

the Third Way movement, who intend to meet with committee activists on the Golan tomorrow.

"We are basically saying to the public in general and leaders of the parties who oppose any form of withdrawal and support our 'Peace with the Golan' campaign, that the time for action is now - before it is too late," said Heimer. He added that the committee was planning activities to coincide with the upcoming shuttle to the region by US Secretary of State Warren Christopher.

Less than 5,000 Palestinians eligible to vote in Jerusalem

BILL HUTMAN

LESS than 5,000 Palestinians will be allowed to vote in Jerusalem in the upcoming Palestinian elections because of Israel's refusal to open additional polling stations in the city, the Jerusalem Post has learned.

Palestinian and Israeli officials confirmed yesterday that nearly all of the 45,000 Palestinian voters in Jerusalem will have to travel to polling stations outside the city on election day, January 20.

PA officials charged the limitations on voting in Jerusalem are part of a general crackdown on campaign and election activity by Israel in the city.

"People will have to make their own way, either by private car, or maybe bus or taxi, to the stations outside the city," said Anna Abu Mazir, Jerusalem district office head for the Central Election Commission.

The CEC estimates the number of Palestinians who will be able to vote in Jerusalem at 4,400. Israeli sources put the number at between 4,500 and 5,000.

Mazir spent over an hour on the phone yesterday afternoon trying to get Israeli approval for a candidate to hold a rally at the Hakawati Theatre in eastern Jerusalem.

"We have been told that there can be no outdoor rallies in Jerusalem," Mazir told the Post. "And for indoor rallies, we must get prior approval from the police," he said.

Mazir also charged the police with unfairly tearing down campaign posters, and said candidates should not be limited to using billboards put up by the city for election advertisements.

A police spokesman said police were largely ignoring the numerous violations by the Palestinian candidates of city ordinances limiting the use of campaign posters.

An Israeli official, who asked not to be named, said election regulations including the number of persons allowed to vote in the city was worked out some time ago between the two sides.

At this late stage, the official said, there is no chance for major changes in those regulations, despite the complaints.

"It was clear in the negotiations that what the Palestinians were most interested in was at least a symbolic presence of the elections in Jerusalem," the official said.

"This is what we agreed to, and no more," the official said.

About 80,000 Palestinians are registered to vote in the Jerusalem District.

NEWS IN BRIEF

Judge Avrahami questioned by police
Jerusalem Magistrate's Court Judge Amir Avrahami was questioned yesterday under caution for six hours by the National Criminal Squad in Petah Tikva. Attorney General Michael Ben-Yair decided to open an investigation into allegations that Avrahami committed sexual acts against a court typist and a breach of trust by allegedly consulting with a friend on court rulings.

Interior Ministry worker under house arrest
The former director of the Interior Ministry's eastern Jerusalem branch was released yesterday to house arrest by the Petah Tikva Magistrate's Court. Haim Ben-Atar was arrested on Monday on suspicion of taking bribes to issue passports and identity cards to residents. Dozens of other workers and witnesses have already been questioned in the affair.

'Post' drops labor court appeal
The Jerusalem Post has withdrawn its petition to the High Court of Justice regarding the National Labor Court's awarding of compensation to former employee Joanna Yehiel. The petition was withdrawn following the recommendation of justices Zvi Tal, Theodor Or and Tova Strasberg-Cohen. The Post had claimed Yehiel had resigned with a group of journalists six years ago when the paper changed ownership, and should therefore not be treated individually. The court did not accept this argument and recommended dropping the petition.

נרדן ד"ר האמור
We regretfully announce the death of
AARON JOSEPH BEN-EZRA
The funeral took place on Tuesday afternoon, Shiva at the home of the deceased, 2 Levi Eshkol, Apartment 7, Ramat Eshkol, Jerusalem.
Wife: Phyllis Ben-Ezra - Jerusalem
Sister: Miriam Ben-Ezra Denburg - Montreal
Son and Daughter-in-law: Jonathan Ben-Ezra and Robin Zeiger - Richmond, Va.
Daughter and Son-in-law: Esther and Shalom Parnes - Eilat
Grandchildren: Yael, Avshalom, Eliana and Akiva

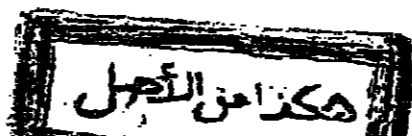
With deep sorrow we mourn the great loss of our beloved
MALI SPIELMAN
a noble-minded and righteous woman
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Shulamit and Yehuda Resnik and children
Daniel and Yaffa Spielman and children
Tzvi and Dina Spielman and children

Social & Personal

THE WEEKLY MEETING of the English-speaking Jerusalem Rotary Club will meet tonight at 7:30 p.m. for a gala dinner at the Art Village next to the Rav Green Cinema, Tapach. Visiting Rotarians are welcome.

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ANNOUNCEMENT
The Consulate General of Greece in Jerusalem announces that its Visa Section will start operating every Monday, Wednesday and Friday, from 9:00 a.m. to 12:30 p.m., as of Monday, January 15, 1996, at the Consular Premises at 11 Nashashibi Street, Sheikh Jarrah, Jerusalem, Tel. (02) 828316.



Kiryat Arba settlers can't use community center to discuss moving, compensation

HERB KEINON

A GROUP of Kiryat Arba residents who are fighting for government compensation to move inside the Green Line will go ahead with a meeting in the settlement later this month, even though the local council will not let them meet at the community center.

Sima Mizrahi, a 20-year veteran of the community and one of the leaders of a group trying to get compensation for leaving now, said that the group has nothing against the settlement, but wants to move "for security reasons." She said the meeting will be held at the home of one of those involved in the group.

Peace Now has for months been supporting groups in various settlements who are lobbying the government for compensation to leave their settlements voluntarily.

The official government position, as articulated yesterday by ministers Binyamin Ben-Eliezer and Yossi Beilin, is that the government has no intentions of removing any settlements now and will not pay settlers to leave their settlements at this time.

However, Beilin told Israel Radio, if in the final settlement with the Palestinians there will be settlements outside Israeli sovereignty, "I assume that the Israeli government will offer financial assistance for those who don't want to live outside [Israeli sovereignty]."

Responding to Beilin, Mizrahi said, "We don't want to be the government's bargaining chip."

"What are they waiting for, another five people to be killed? The security situation here is getting much worse, and once the IDF moves out of Hebron it will get even worse. We will not be secure here."

Yossi Ben-Porat, another Kiryat Arba resident involved in the group, said that in the last week there has been a drastic increase in stone-throwing incidents on the way to the settlement. "Now Hal-houl is almost clear of the IDF," he said. "I hardly see a jeep there anymore. And as a result, the incidents there have risen dramatically."

Mizrahi said she received a phone threat yesterday, when a man called and warned her to watch herself and asked if she has life insurance. She filed a complaint with the police.

Kiryat Arba Local Council head Zvi Katzover said he deplores these types of threats.

Katzover defended his decision not to let the group use the Kiryat Arba community center, saying there is no reason that a local authority has to help activities that split the community.

"In my mind," Katzover said, "those who want to leave in these difficult days before the government has made any decision [as to a final agreement] want to make money."

Ben-Eliezer cancels Goldfarb's move to market hundreds of units in settlements

MICHAL YUDELMAN and HERB KEINON

HOUSING Minister Binyamin Ben-Eliezer issued orders yesterday canceling Deputy Minister Alex Goldfarb's instructions to sell or rent hundreds of empty housing units in Judea and Samaria settlements.

In a letter sent to Ben-Eliezer on Monday, Goldfarb said he was going to allow people to move into finished apartments in Karnei Shomron in Samaria, and Nissanit and Alei Sinai in the northern Gaza Strip. The government has not allowed the marketing of these homes because of its settlement housing freeze.

"I respect my deputy," Ben-Eliezer said, "but he has no authority to give an order to move people into the homes. I don't think he knows [the situation], and I hope that he is not motivated by other considerations. The matter of moving people into homes is within the purview of the ministerial committee, and the person with the authority [to give such an order] is the minister of housing and construction."

Ben-Eliezer said he "does not understand" Goldfarb's move.

"These things go through a process," he said. "A deputy

minister cannot do these things, it embarrasses the government. You cannot have a situation where the minister says one thing, and a deputy minister roams around in the field and gives [other] directives."

Goldfarb, for his part, said that Ben-Eliezer gave him authority over the Housing Ministry-owned companies to which the units belong, and as such he has the authority to give directives to the

companies to sell or rent the homes.

"The Peres government did not decide that I am unable to deal with this matter," Goldfarb said. "As long as I do not get a written directive to the contrary, I am capable of operating within the authority that I have."

Yehuda Lieberman, head of the Karnei Shomron Regional Council, said that what is at stake are about 180 housing units in the settlement, 80 of which have been broken into and are being lived in illegally, and 100 others that are standing empty.

There are also about 100 units in Alei Sinai and Nissanit.

Lieberman said he received promises from numerous ministers, including Ben-Eliezer and Internal Security Minister Moshe Shahal, that the government will allow people to move into the units in his settlement.

But, he said, nothing came of these promises, so he recently approached Goldfarb.

According to Lieberman, some 180 housing units were recently sold or rented in Ariel and he wants the same thing to take place in Karnei Shomron.

Meshulam's followers lose remand appeal

RAINE MARCUS

THREE of Uzi Meshulam's followers, remanded Sunday for allegedly trying to penetrate Internal Security Minister Moshe Shahal's home last Friday, appealed their detention to Tel Aviv District Court yesterday. Judge Avraham Baizer rejected the appeal of Moshe Ezer, Avinoam Marhov, and Ilan Anaki.

The three were remanded for a week on suspicion of posting seditious notices near Shahal's Haifa home, conspiracy to commit a crime, insulting a civil servant, and obstructing a policeman in the course of his duty.

Police say the three, together with others who have not yet been arrested, succeeded in penetrating round-the-clock police and GSS security at Shahal's home, but fled when challenged by a policeman.

The three claim they were in the area simply to put up posters.

Prosecutor Nava Bachur argued that the posters were seditious and that the suspects also conspired to harm Shahal.

In rejecting the appeal, Judge Baizer ruled that the police should be given time to complete their investigation while the three are in custody.

Meanwhile, Meshulam was punished yesterday at a disciplinary hearing before Ramle's Ayalon Prison warden Avi Harari for conducting an interview with Yehudi Aharonot from a public phone at the prison against regulations.

Meshulam was given a "severe caution" and was banned from receiving one weekly visitor and from using the telephone for a week. He was also given a suspended 14-day sentence of solitary confinement, to be activated if he further violates prison regulations.



Uzi Meshulam's followers (from left) Avinoam Marhov, Moshe Ezer, and Ilan Anaki attend the appeal of their remand yesterday at Tel Aviv District Court. (Hanoach Grizitsky/Israel Sun)

Push for recycling in mandatory deposits on soft drink containers

EVELYN GORDON

PEOPLE would have to pay a deposit on soda cans and bottles, which they would get back when they return the containers for recycling, according to a bill approved by the Knesset Economics Committee for first reading yesterday.

A second bill approved by the committee for first reading yesterday would provide financial penalties for manufacturers who do not make their packages out of materials that can be either recycled or destroyed without harming the environment. The two will be eventually be combined.

The soda can deposit bill was submitted by Law Committee chairman Dedi Zucker (Meretz), who noted that in other countries, the deposit system has dramatically increased recycling. In the US, for instance, states without deposit systems recycle about 50 percent of their soft drink cans, while states with deposits recycle some 85%, he said. In Scandinavia, deposits have encouraged a recycling level of 90%, he added.

Zucker stressed that increasing the recycling of soda cans and bottles would significantly improve the garbage situation in the country, since these containers constitute some 18% of all garbage in terms of volume, and 60% of the garbage in public areas.

The second bill, by Avraham Poraz (Meretz), would impose a tax on manufacturers for packages which cannot be recycled or safely destroyed, of NIS 1 per small package, NIS 2 for a medium-sized package and NIS 3 for a large package. The bill would also require deposits on the recyclable packages. Poraz suggested a deposit of at least NIS 0.50 for a small package, NIS 1 for a medium package and NIS 1.5 for a big package.

Both bills were supported by the Environment and Health ministries and the Union of Local Authorities, but opposed by the Treasury, the Industry and Trade Ministry, the Manufacturers Association and the Federation of Israeli Chambers of Commerce.

Action may be taken against clinics recommending ulcer tests

JUDY SIEGEL

ADVERTISEMENTS by a chain of private clinics encouraging people to be tested for bacteria in the digestive tract to diagnose ulcers are misleading, according to the Israel Medical Association and the Israel Gastroenterology Society. The Health Ministry said it agrees, and is considering taking action against the chain.

A few weeks ago Helico Labs - which has 28 branches around the country - started an advertising campaign urging people with the symptoms of ulcers to come for a "painless breathing test" to detect the presence of the bacteria. If these are found, the ads say, clinic staffers will recommend to the patient's doctor that antibiotics be prescribed to cure the condition. "Research has shown that until you get rid of *Helicobacter pylori*, you won't be rid of ulcers," the ads claim. "Come for a checkup to be healthy."

Prof. Shmuel Eidelman, chairman of the Israel Medical Association's scientific committee, said yesterday on behalf of the IMA and the gastroenterology society that the ads may mislead the public. "These bacteria are found in the digestive systems of a large percentage of the healthy public," he said. "Whoever wants to be examined should go to his doctor and get advice."

Olmert out to prove Talpiot school is safe

JERUSALEM Mayor Ehud Olmert plans to move his bureau to the Mamlachti Bet school next week in an effort to persuade the parents of pupils there that the building is safe. The parents have refused to send their children back to the school in the East Talpiot quarter

where extremely high concentrations of radon were found over the Hanukka holiday. Experts from the Environment Ministry and the municipality are now convinced it is safe for the children to return to the school's non-ground-floor classrooms. BatSheva Tsar

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A Parisian woman weeps yesterday after laying a floral tribute outside the private offices of Francois Mitterrand, who died there on Monday. (Reuters)

France mourns Mitterrand with red-rose tributes

ALISTER DOYLE
PARIS

CROWDS of citizens laid red roses in memory of former Socialist president Francois Mitterrand yesterday as tributes flooded in from home and abroad to the champion of European unity who ruled France for 14 years.

Thousands of Parisians made a pilgrimage to the building near the Eiffel Tower where France's longest-serving president died on Monday after a long battle with cancer. Mourners queued in the rain to add to a pile of red roses, the Socialist symbol, and floral wreaths in the street.

Flags flew at half mast in Jarnac, the southwestern village where Mitterrand was born on 26 October 1916, son of a country station master. He will be buried there tomorrow in a simple funeral with only family and close friends.

France will observe a day of national mourning that day, with a memorial mass in Notre Dame Cathedral in Paris for French and foreign dignitaries including Mitterrand's main partner in building the European Union, German Chancellor Helmut Kohl.

Among world leaders who praised one of post-war Europe's

leading statesmen were President Bill Clinton and Cuban President Fidel Castro, one of the last guests Mitterrand received before leaving office last May.

"The entire world benefited from his strong and principled leadership," Clinton said, calling him a "man of vision". Castro called him "a statesman of world standing... a dear friend".

Mitterrand abolished the guillotine in 1981, worked tirelessly to bring Europe together and aligned France with its Western allies in the Gulf War.

His Gaullist successor, Jacques Chirac, reflected a national mood of respect tinged with affection in a television address.

French media lavished almost unanimous praise on the former president, setting aside criticisms of a man who stirred both love and hate since he first became a cabinet minister in 1947.

The conservative daily *Le Figaro* hailed Mitterrand "an artist of politics". Many commentators

said he would be remembered as the most influential French politician since Charles de Gaulle, the Resistance leader who became president from 1959 to 1969.

European Commission chief Jacques Santer, Italian President Oscar Luigi Scalfaro, Belgian Prime Minister Jean Luc Dehaene and Prime Minister Shimon Peres were among leaders who confirmed they would attend the memorial service in Paris.

Others likely to attend included UN Secretary-General Boutros-Ghali and British Prime Minister John Major. White House officials said Clinton might attend but it was more likely that Vice-President Al Gore would represent him.

Serge July, publisher of the left-leaning daily *Liberation*, recalled the words of the emperor Napoleon in exile after his defeat at the 1815 Battle of Waterloo, saying "There is no French person I have not moved."

"All the French people will have been moved by De Gaulle. They will also have been moved by Francois Mitterrand." (Reuters)

Chechen rebels take 1,000 hostages

CHECHEN fighters and Russian troops fought fierce street battles yesterday after rebels seized about 1,000 hostages in a hospital in southern Russia. At least 16 people were killed in the fighting.

The rebels yesterday demanded a withdrawal of Russian troops from Chechnya and an end to the 13-month war in the breakaway republic. They say they will shoot the hostages if their demands are not met. Officials said they had killed two captives to press their demands.

Itar-Tass news agency quoted interior ministry officials in the town of Kizlyar as saying gunmen using women as human shields were firing machine guns from the upper floor of a hospital where they had rounded up their captives.

The rebel group, calling itself "Lone Wolf", had killed two families when they refused to leave their homes.

"The wolves have come to you. Withdraw troops from Chechnya or civilians will be shot," rebel leader Salman Raduyev told Russian army officers by radio.

The rebel attack on Kizlyar was similar to an incident in the city of Budyonovsk in June when Chechen fighters seized more than 1,000 hostages to demand an end to the war in Chechnya. More than 100 people died in that confrontation.

The new attack dealt a bitter blow to President Boris Yeltsin only six months before presidential elections. Yeltsin, already facing an upsurge of clashes

News agencies
MOSCOW

The raid was similar to the rebel attack in the Russian town of Budyonovsk last June. On that occasion scores of soldiers, civilians and fighters were killed, but the rebels left the town in a triumphant convoy of cars and buses after negotiating the start of peace talks with Russian Prime Minister Viktor Chernomyrdin.

But with a presidential election due in June, Russian authorities may be less ready to negotiate and more ready to try to crush Chechen resistance.

"I expect a storming of the building in Kizlyar and a military crackdown in Chechnya," said Dmitry Treuin, a military expert at the Carnegie Endowment for International Peace.

"We may see troop reinforcements sent to Chechnya, aerial bombardment of rebel positions in the Chechen mountains and more action in the lowlands."

Russia sent troops into Chechnya in December 1994 to try to crush a three-year-old independence bid, and thousands of people died in the first six months of fighting before a shaky peace deal. Fighting has intensified in the last six weeks.

But rebel leader Dzhokhar Dudayev has frequently threatened to take his struggle to the Russian heartland. Many of his Moslem fighters, convinced they were fighting a holy war against the Russian infidel, have said they are not afraid to die.

Like many other towns in the volatile northern Caucasus, Kizlyar is home to dozens of peoples - 32 different nationalities were listed in the town in 1992.

vice when the KGB secret police was split up into several branches after a failed coup against Gorbachev in 1991.

Kozyrev resigned as foreign minister last week to accept a seat in the State Duma, the lower house of parliament.

Yeltsin's office said then that the minister's departure would have no effect on foreign policy.

The Western-oriented Kozyrev had long been a target of hardliners and the appointment of Primakov appeared to be a signal the Kremlin no longer considers its old Cold War foes to be the main threat to Russia's security. (Agencies)

Russia's spy master named as new foreign minister

MOSCOW - President Boris Yeltsin yesterday named Yevgeny Primakov, head of Russia's foreign intelligence service, as new foreign minister, the presidential press service said.

Primakov replaces Andrei Kozyrev, who resigned last week.

Primakov is a specialist in Middle East affairs and Islamic fundamentalism, and one of Yeltsin's longest serving senior officials. A political scientist, he played a major role in Moscow's efforts to prevent the Gulf War by negotiating with Iraq's Saddam Hussein.

He was appointed by then Soviet leader Mikhail Gorbachev to head the foreign intelligence ser-

vice when the KGB secret police was split up into several branches after a failed coup against Gorbachev in 1991.

Yeltsin's office said then that the minister's departure would have no effect on foreign policy.

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German spy-swap lawyer convicted of extortion

BERLIN (Reuters) - Wolfgang Vogel, the East Berlin lawyer who gained fame by engineering Cold War spy swaps, was convicted by a German court yesterday of extorting money from East German emigrants eager to flee to the West.

Vogel, a close confidant of former East German leader Erich Honecker and one of the Soviet bloc's rare millionaires, was found guilty of perjury, four counts of blackmail and five counts of falsifying documents.

The Berlin court gave him the two-year suspended sentence and a 92,000 mark (NIS 190,000) fine. Prosecutors had pressed for a 3 1/2-year jail sentence and a 300,000 mark (NIS 645,000) penalty.

Vogel, 70, who got his start arranging the 1962 exchange of US pilot Gary Powers for Soviet spy Rudolf Abel, insisted his only crime was trying to help unite people separated by the Cold War division of Germany.

"The court said that I helped people - what more can I say?" Vogel said after Judge Heinz Holzinger spent 90 minutes reading the verdict to a packed court.

"An extortionist cannot help people," Vogel said, trying to look upbeat despite the conviction. "If I

had to do it over again, I would do exactly the same thing."

A flashy dresser whose golden Mercedes was a regular sight at Cold War spy swaps, he also spent six years negotiating the 1986 release of Natan Sharansky (then Anatoly Shcharansky) in exchange for captured communist spies.

Wolfgang Ziegler, his chief defense attorney, criticized the ruling and said Vogel would now consider an appeal.

Yesterday's ruling was a rare victory for prosecutors trying to unify Germany's courts to bring former communist power-brokers to justice.

Vogel's numerous friends in the west, mostly Bonn officials who worked with him during the Cold War, attacked the verdict as an example of "victor's justice."

"Vogel was certainly no Florence Nightingale of the Cold War and we should not make a hero out of him," said Klaus Boelling, Bonn's representative in East Berlin during the 1980s.

Before the collapse of Erich Honecker's iron regime, Vogel was his personal aide for "humanitarian issues" and was widely admired on both sides of the Iron Curtain as a master deal-maker.

Corsica rocked by multiple bombings

AJACCIO, Corsica (AP) - Bombs planted by Corsican nationalists exploded at more than a dozen businesses and government offices around this French Mediterranean island overnight, authorities said yesterday.

No one was injured in the bombings, which began overnight and continued into yesterday morning. More than three dozen bombs were planted, but not all went off, authorities said.

Targets included a government tax office and a national econom-

ic research agency in Ajaccio, a post office in southern Corsica, a port authority in northern Corsica and businesses around the French Mediterranean island, mainly banks.

The clandestine group Resistenza said in a communique that it claimed responsibility for the attacks. Corsican militants who have claimed other recent attacks are demanding tax breaks and greater autonomy from France.

Since November, the "Historic Wing" of the Front for the National Liberation of Corsica has

claimed more than two dozen attacks that have caused an estimated \$40 million in damage.

French Interior Minister Jean-Louis Debré confirmed yesterday he would head to Corsica soon, France Inter radio reported.

Corsicans have come to call the overnight bombings "blue nights," for the blue flashes that accompany the bombs' explosions.

The bomb at the port authority heavily damaged that building, but other damage was called light or moderate.

One killed as RPG hits Sarajevo streetcar

SARAJEVO - A rocket-propelled grenade slammed into a Sarajevo streetcar yesterday, punching a gaping hole in its roof and killing a man.

The attack occurred shortly before 6 p.m. as the tram was traveling on the city's main boulevard. It was the most serious incident since the Oct. 12 cease fire that led to the Bosnian peace agreement signed Dec. 14 in Paris.

The grenade left a 30-cm gap in the roof of the street car. Reporters arriving on the scene shortly afterward saw a blanket covering the man, lying in a pool of blood.

There was no indication where the attack came from. But the street, known as Sniper Alley because of the dozens of deaths caused by snipers during the more than 3 1/2 year war, lies in the government-held section of the Bosnian capital, with Serb-held sectors to its south.

The White House announced yesterday that President Clinton will travel to Bosnia this weekend to visit US peacekeeping troops.

Presidential spokesman Mike McCurry said today Clinton will depart for the region from Nashville. He was scheduled to be in Tennessee on Friday to attend a campaign fund-raiser and address factory workers.

Citing security concerns, McCurry provided no other details.

The president planned to be in New York tomorrow, before flying to Tennessee, but aides said the trip might be canceled due to the East Coast snowstorm.

In Geneva the International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC) said yesterday that the Bosnian government army was blocking the release next week of the last 900 prisoners of the war.

In a news release, the ICRC said Bosnian Serb and Croat officers had accepted an ICRC "plan of operation" for the release at a meeting in Sarajevo but the Bosnian army representative "put forward conditions to be fulfilled prior to his signature".

Under the Dayton peace accord

all prisoners held by the three warring sides must be released by next Friday. Under the ICRC's own timetable, the releases are scheduled for next Monday and Tuesday.

Ursula Eugster, ICRC desk officer for former Yugoslavia, declined to say what conditions had been laid down by the Bosnian army, but pointed out that the Dayton accord had set a deadline of January 8 for the "plan of operation" to be presented and accepted.

"There is a calendar to be respected," Eugster said. "There is still time and negotiations are going on."

Serb soldiers around Sarajevo lit fires yesterday in an apparent move to destroy positions they are due to vacate soon under the peace plan.

Loud explosions could be heard amid flames and smoke rising above separatist Serb frontlines some four km north of the city center. Smoke could also be seen rising from the south. (Agencies)

Turkey's Islamic activists bid to take power

ANKARA (Reuters) - Turkey's Islamist leader Necmettin Erbakan yesterday got the chance to form a government after inconclusive general elections last month but secular opponents have vowed to block his path to power.

"The president has given us the task of forming a government. We will try to complete it in the shortest time possible," he told reporters at the presidential palace after President Suleyman Demirel appointed him premier-designate.

Erbakan's Welfare Party (RP), with 158 seats in the 550-member parliament, is well short of an absolute majority and may struggle to find coalition partners from among the secularist parties.

Welfare won the most seats at the December 24 elections in the first victory by an Islamist party at general polls in modern Turkey's 72-year history as a strictly secular republic.

Any new government will be faced with annual inflation of around 80 percent, widening deficits and violence by Kurdish and leftist militants.

The Revolutionary People's Liberation Party/Front (DHKP/C) leftist urban guerrilla

group claimed responsibility for the murder of Ozdemir Sabanci, head of Toyota's car company which is a joint venture with Japan's Toyota, Haluk Gorgun, the firm's general manager and a secretary.

Guamens breached tight security to carry out the attack at the company's offices in the glass-fronted twin towers of Sabanci Centre in a fashionable district of Istanbul.

Turkey has been almost rudderless since caretaker Prime Minister Tansu Ciller's left-right coalition collapsed last September.

An influential business leader blamed the country's lack of leadership for the daring killing of two leading industrialists by left-wing guerrillas in Istanbul yesterday.

"We warn the politicians that the political vacuum in Turkey provokes such kinds of attacks," said Refik Baydur, head of the Turkish Union of Employers.

Volatile financial markets - spooked first by the Welfare victory, then by continued uncertainty - had closed before the Erbakan announcement.

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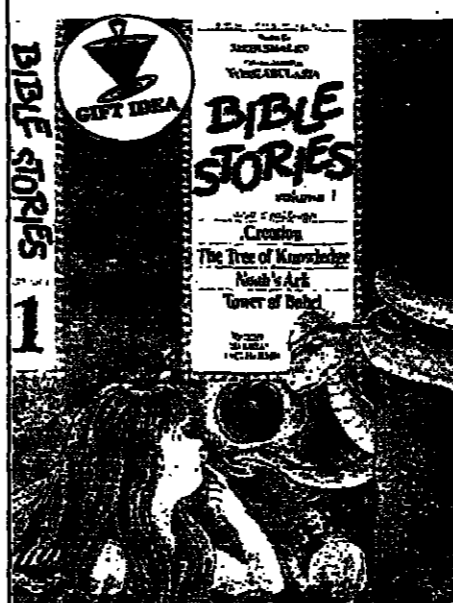
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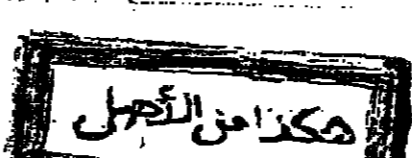
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UK to save jobs by deporting Saudi critic

CON COUGHLIN LONDON

THE Saudi Arabian government acted swiftly over the weekend to distance itself from the row over Britain's proposed deportation of a leading Saudi dissident in a move that typified the regime's obsession with secrecy and security.

Saudi Defense Minister Prince Sultan said Mohammed Masari, whom Britain has decided to deport to protect its trade relations with the kingdom, no longer deserved Saudi citizenship.

"Saudi citizenship is abolished when one shuns his religion, beliefs and country," Prince Sultan said when questioned by reporters in Riyadh.

Even though maintaining good relations with Saudi Arabia has for years been near the top of the UK's list of diplomatic priorities, both countries prefer to conduct their business away from the glare of publicity.

So when Sheikh Nayef bin Abdul Aziz, the Saudi interior minister, claimed the decision to expel Masari was entirely a British affair, he was merely following a long tradition of discretion.

From the moment 18 months ago when Dr. Masari escaped from a Saudi prison - where he had been held for criticizing the corruption of the Saudi royal family - the Saudi government has been working overtime to persuade London to take effective action to silence him.

To this end, the Saudi authorities used the carrot of a multi-billion pound defense contract.

Sir Archie Hamilton, a former British Armed Forces minister, said the decision to deport Masari had been made to help secure a new tank deal for Vickers, the northeastern arms manufacturer.

"The [UK] government has to take a balance when there are a very large number of jobs in the northeast involved and a significantly large tank contract against the position of someone who wants to make trouble against the Saudi government in London," Hamilton told the BBC.

THE ROW over Masari was further complicated by the revelation that Andrew Green, Britain's newly appointed ambassador to Saudi Arabia, is a non-executive director at Vickers, the defense company which is currently bidding for a huge tank contract with Riyadh to supplement the so-called al-Yamamah deal signed by prime minister Margaret Thatcher in the mid-1980s.

The company last week admitted it had warned the government in recent months that Masari posed a threat to trade with Saudi Arabia. Vickers, together with

other British firms, are negotiating aeronautical and defense sales worth around £3 billion (NIS 14.4b.).

The government, of course, is not out of the woods. Masari has made it clear he intends to appeal against the deportation order, and if he succeeds the proposed defense contracts may again be in jeopardy.

That Masari should decide to seek refuge in London was no surprise. In the past few years the capital has become the international rendezvous place for leading Islamic militants.

Britain provides a safe haven for Algerians who plant bombs on the Paris Metro, Palestinians who train suicide-bombers, Egyptians and Tunisians who plot the overthrow of their governments, together with a kaleidoscopic array of Islamic militants who want to change the world.

Compared with these, Masari appears like a paragon of moderation.

Unlike many radical Islamic magazines published in London, some of which openly advocate terrorism, antisemitism and the destruction of the West, the weekly newsletter published by Masari and his associates campaigns on issues such as allowing Saudi women the right to drive their own cars.

The main thrust of his campaign is to advocate the introduction of wider democracy in Saudi Arabia, a measure King Fahd promised to introduce during the Gulf war.

He is also, on occasion, highly critical of the corruption that is endemic within the higher echelons of the Saudi royal family. It is the latter issue that has provoked Saudi ire.

There are, of course, suspicions that there is more to Masari than meets the eye. That, were he to succeed in his campaign to become a key policy-maker within the Saudi regime, he would take a radical Islamic path.

But this is not the reason the British government decided to deport him to the Caribbean island of Dominica which has offered him a safe haven.

Ever since Thatcher signed the £20b. (NIS 96b.) deal to sell Tornado jet-fighters to Saudi Arabia in the mid-1980s, Britain has bent over backwards to keep the Saudis sweet.

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ALGERIAN PRESIDENT Liamine Zeroual meanwhile told his new government to step up preparations for parliamentary and local elections, seen by the authorities as a way of helping end

PA vote said safe from Hamas attack

PALESTINIANS agree that the assassination of leading Hamas terrorist Yihye Ayyash will affect the January 20 elections for the chairman of and local representatives to the Palestinian Authority council. They do not agree how it will influence the vote.

Some senior Fatah activists, who spoke on condition of anonymity, believe the slaying relieved Hamas's political leadership of a burden they shared with the Palestinian Authority, bringing Hamas and the PA closer.

Known Hamas personalities, like leader Mahmoud Zahar, have asked the PA to return their weapons so they can protect themselves against Israeli attacks, but Zahar did not accuse the PA of complicity in the Ayyash assassination. He repeated his opposition to inter-Palestinian violence, a Fatah leader said.

The Fatah source said independent candidates who used to be associated with Hamas, like Imad

Falouji, have not withdrawn from the ballot.

"Hamas has only itself to blame. It was their own security breach, and they know it," the Fatah leader said.

He said the PA and Hamas had reached a number of agreements in their meeting in Cairo about a month ago. Although Hamas refused to participate in the elections, its political leaders agreed not to obstruct them.

Hamas had also agreed to refrain from attacks against Israel, at least temporarily, he said. Ayyash was a problem because he might have acted unilaterally in violation of that understanding.

Hebron Mayor Mustafa Natshe said he did not know what kind of agreement had been worked out between the PA and Hamas on violence against Israel, but he said there was an understanding to halt attacks. He noted that Israel allowed Hamas leaders to travel and attend the meeting.

hold elections at all."

Hanan Ashrawi, who is running as an independent candidate in Jerusalem, said the assassination of Ayyash had created a climate making it difficult to hold free and democratic elections.

She said it would turn people against the PA as they question the PA's ability to protect them.

"The villages around Jerusalem which are part of the electoral districts are closed off from the city, that makes the campaign difficult," she said, adding that a permanent end to the closure in Jerusalem was part of her election platform.

The strikes called for by Hamas following the killing of Ayyash have also affected the election campaign, most Palestinians agree.

The already short campaign period has been whittled down, since most Palestinian candidates did not want to campaign during the mourning period for fear of offending Hamas, one Fatah leader said.

LAMIA LAHOUD

He said Hamas understands the PA was not involved and that the timing of the assassination could have been aimed at destroying the PA-Hamas agreement. He does not think PA-Hamas relations will suffer much, but he admitted no one knows how some Hamas elements might react.

ANY ATTACK against Israel will have a negative effect on the elections and counter-measures taken by Israel could force the PA to postpone the poll, the Fatah leader said.

He said the political leadership of Hamas would call for restraint to avoid interfering with the elections, but militant elements could act on their own.

He said the fact that Hamas leaders received Arafat on Sunday night at the mosque in Gaza and accepted his condolences for Ayyash showed that they did not want to jeopardize their agree-

ments with the PA.

Arafat's statements in Dura on Sunday in which he praised Ayyash as a martyr and prayed for him were electioneering and meant to reassure Hamas that the PA was not involved in the killing, he said.

Ayyash was indeed a problem for Arafat and the PA, but his killing so near the election was at an inopportune time, the Fatah leader said.

PA officials do not believe that Israeli-PA relations will suffer as a result of the killing. The Fatah leaders say Israeli leaders understand that Arafat's statements in Dura were electioneering.

But the closure, they believe, may have a negative effect on the popularity of the Fatah list.

"People will blame the PA for not protecting them from these punitive measures," the Fatah source said. "If there are any terror attacks, Israeli countermeasures could incite the population against the PA, and security measures could make it impossible to

Lebanese hope US will lift travel ban

PRESIDENT Elias Hrawi said this week he expected the US soon to lift a nine-year ban on Americans traveling to Lebanon.

"We are pretty sure that the US will lift the ban soon and air traffic is expected to resume again between our two countries," Hrawi said.

He was speaking to Beirut-based foreign diplomats at a New Year reception at the Presidential Palace.

Washington imposed the travel ban in 1987 following a wave of hostage taking and aircraft hijackings that turned Lebanon into a terrorist haven during its 1975-1990 civil war.

Hrawi said Lebanon would not be a hindrance to the US-sponsored Middle East peace process after the recent resumption of the stalled negotiations between Syria and Israel.

"We are today on our way toward an honorable peace," he said. "We want to put an end to the Israeli occupation of two beloved Lebanese regions: the south and the western Bekaa, in order to recover our right, our land and our sovereignty."

Hrawi indicated last month that the government would deploy units of its 50,000-strong army in the south, the last active Arab-Israeli war front, to stop terrorist attacks if Israel withdraws under a peace accord.

Progress in Syrian-Israeli peace talks is virtually certain to lead to a revival of the Lebanese-Israeli negotiations, which have been stalled for 18 months.

Syria is Lebanon's main power broker. It maintains 40,000 soldiers in Lebanon ostensibly to prevent a resumption of the civil war, which killed more than 150,000 people and caused damage worth \$25 billion.

LEBANON MOURNED former French president Francois Mitterrand this week as a great world leader who tirelessly defended Lebanese independence.

"France and the world lose with president Francois Mitterrand's death one of the most outstanding personalities who left his imprint on the 20th century," Foreign Minister Faris Boutez told reporters.

"Lebanon has lost with his death a big personality who understood the Orient and the Lebanese crisis in all its facets," Boutez said.

Lebanon gained independence from France in 1943. French officials have repeatedly demanded the full restoration of its sovereignty and independence and the departure of Syria's 40,000 troops based in the country. (News agencies)



King Hussein and US Defense Secretary William Perry announce at a press conference in Amman on Monday that the US will supply Jordan with arms including 16 F-16 fighters.

Smooth Saudi transition calms US fears

THOMAS W. LIPPMAN AND R. JEFFREY SMITH

THE apparently seamless transition of power in Saudi Arabia has been greeted with relief in Washington, where the stability of one of its most important economic and strategic allies is a matter of concern.

Every signal from the kingdom indicates that all important figures in the ruling family have assented to the January 1 transfer of royal authority from the incapacitated King Fahd to his half-brother, Crown Prince Abdullah, who now governs as regent.

Orderly as it appears to have been, however, the transition did little to address the issues that continue to stir anxiety in the US about the kingdom's future: Islamic extremism, a financial squeeze, a fast-growing population, allegations of corruption in high places and uncertainty about future royal successions.

Those concerns were exacerbated when a car bomb went off outside a US military office in Riyadh in November, killing five Americans. Then Fahd, a longtime friend of the US, suffered a stroke in early December. But the car-bomb attack has not been repeated, and now the accession of Abdullah has turned down the anxiety meter.

While Fahd's departure is officially temporary, to give him time to recuperate from a stroke that left him unable to travel or perform public duties, most US government officials, say independent analysts, assume that the transition is permanent.

As long as Fahd is alive, gov-

ernment and independent analysts said, Abdullah is unlikely to make any major decisions without the king's approval, but in any case there is no indication that Abdullah plans important changes in the kingdom's domestic or foreign policies.

THE DIFFERENCES are more likely to be stylistic, analysts said. Fahd, 74, was for years a renowned playboy who frequented Mediterranean watering holes and developed a taste for luxury. Abdullah, 72, has a reputation as a pious ascetic, more in tune with tradition-minded Beduin.

But both are sons of King Abdul Azziz bin Saud, the unifier of modern Saudi Arabia, are longtime partners in running the country and are dedicated to preserving the family's rule and the Saudi system of governance they have practiced all their adult lives, analysts and government officials said.

Abdullah is not king and does not have a free hand, specialists said. But he may well be better positioned than Fahd to ensure perpetuation of the family's rule because he is apparently less controversial within the kingdom.

He is less vulnerable than Fahd to the charges of corruption and profligacy that have provided ammunition to the Islamic hardliners who constitute the kingdom's most difficult domestic problem, analysts said. And be-

from Fahd to Abdullah, there were no such signs.

"This orderly transition speaks well of the kingdom and of the royal family," said former US ambassador Charles Freeman.

State Department deputy spokesman Glyn Davies gave the official view: "In terms of the kingdom and its governance, we think it's in good and stable hands."

"I have no problems and no concerns whatsoever about Abdullah," another State Department official said. "We have had complete cooperation with him for years," in his capacity as first deputy prime minister and commander of the National Guard.

As for the view expressed by some analysts that Abdullah is less willing than Fahd to accept Arab peace with Israel, the State Department official said, "That's old-fashioned. It may have been true in the 1970s, but the situation has changed completely."

Another US official who monitors Saudi Arabia agreed that Abdullah will accept peace with Israel if Syria reaches a peace agreement with Jerusalem.

"You won't see Saudi Arabia standing alone as a frontline state if Syria goes along," he said.

Any changes in Saudi foreign policy under Abdullah would come extremely slowly, US officials said, noting that he would first have to win a consensus among members of the ruling family. (The Washington Post)

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ALGERIAN PRESIDENT Liamine Zeroual meanwhile told his new government to step up preparations for parliamentary and local elections, seen by the authorities as a way of helping end

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 CON COUGHLIN LONDON
 THE Saudi Arabian government acted swiftly over the weekend to distance itself from the row over Britain's proposed deportation of a leading Saudi dissident in a move that typified the regime's obsession with secrecy and security.
 Saudi Defense Minister Prince Sultan said Mohammed Masari, whom Britain has decided to deport to protect its trade relations with the kingdom, no longer deserved Saudi citizenship.
 "Saudi citizenship is abolished when one shuns his religion, beliefs and country," Prince Sultan said when questioned by reporters in Riyadh.
 Even though maintaining good relations with Saudi Arabia has for years been near the top of the UK's list of diplomatic priorities, both countries prefer to conduct their business away from the glare of publicity.
 So when Sheikh Nayef bin Abdul Aziz, the Saudi interior minister, claimed the decision to expel Masari was entirely a British affair, he was merely following a long tradition of discretion.
 From the moment 18 months ago when Dr. Masari escaped from a Saudi prison - where he had been held for criticizing the corruption of the Saudi royal family - the Saudi government has been working overtime to persuade London to take effective action to silence him.
 To this end, the Saudi authorities used the carrot of a multi-billion pound defense contract.
 Sir Archie Hamilton, a former British Armed Forces minister, said the decision to deport Masari had been made to help secure a new tank deal for Vickers, the northeastern arms manufacturer.
 "The [UK] government has to take a balance when there are a very large number of jobs in the northeast involved and a significantly large tank contract against the position of someone who wants to make trouble against the Saudi government in London," Hamilton told the BBC.
 THE ROW over Masari was further complicated by the revelation that Andrew Green, Britain's newly appointed ambassador to Saudi Arabia, is a non-executive director at Vickers, the defense company which is currently bidding for a huge tank contract with Riyadh to supplement the so-called al-Yamamah deal signed by prime minister Margaret Thatcher in the mid-1980s.
 The company last week admitted it had warned the government in recent months that Masari posed a threat to trade with Saudi Arabia. Vickers, together with
 other British firms, are negotiating aeronautical and defense sales worth around £3 billion (NIS 14.4b.).
 The government, of course, is not out of the woods. Masari has made it clear he intends to appeal against the deportation order, and if he succeeds the proposed defense contracts may again be in jeopardy.
 That Masari should decide to seek refuge in London was no surprise. In the past few years the capital has become the international rendezvous place for leading Islamic militants.
 Britain provides a safe haven for Algerians who plant bombs on the Paris Metro, Palestinians who train suicide-bombers, Egyptians and Tunisians who plot the overthrow of their governments, together with a kaleidoscopic array of Islamic militants who want to change the world.
 Compared with these, Masari appears like a paragon of moderation.
 Unlike many radical Islamic magazines published in London, some of which openly advocate terrorism, antisemitism and the destruction of the West, the weekly newsletter published by Masari and his associates campaigns on issues such as allowing Saudi women the right to drive their own cars.
 The main thrust of his campaign is to advocate the introduction of wider democracy in Saudi Arabia, a measure King Fahd promised to introduce during the Gulf war.
 He is also, on occasion, highly critical of the corruption that is endemic within the higher echelons of the Saudi royal family. It is the latter issue that has provoked Saudi ire.
 There are, of course, suspicions that there is more to Masari than meets the eye. That, were he to succeed in his campaign to become a key policy-maker within the Saudi regime, he would take a radical Islamic path.
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Turkey's startling new image

RARELY has the outside world's view of a nation changed more abruptly than in the case of Turkey. Western states have long looked on Turkey as outstanding proof that a Moslem country can indeed embrace democracy while retaining pride in its Islamic heritage and the free practice of its people's religion. It has always stood as the ultimate answer to those who argued that the religious laws of Islam and the secular values of a pluralistic society are fundamentally incompatible. But the sudden rise of the Islamic Welfare Party (RP) to the edge of power in elections two weeks ago has changed all that.

As the painful efforts to remake the Middle East have been forging ahead, the world has been startled to discover that the solid bridge between the West and the Moslem world — Turkey — may have started to creak. Turkey's future as a secular democracy, perhaps even as the first Moslem member of the European Union, has begun to look decidedly shaky. The change appears all the more startling because it has meant the departure of the remarkable Tansu Ciller as premier. Her election had appeared to be the crowning proof that Turkey had completed its long journey from the reforms of Kemal Ataturk to the brink of a new century as a modernist, free market democracy.

Then suddenly the RP burst on the scene with an election manifesto that could have been drawn up in Syria or Iraq. Its leader Necmettin Erbakan called for an Islamic United Nations, an Islamic NATO and an Islamic rival to the European Union. Erbakan pledged to abolish interest in financial dealings and to improve ties with Teheran and Baghdad. Israelis, recently charmed by the sophisticated Ciller, woke up to hear of Erbakan ranting like some Hamas minion against "world imperialism, Zionism, Israel

and their champagne-drinking collaborators."

It would have meant little if the RP remained on the margins of power. All democracies take a certain perverse delight in nurturing fringe parties — they add the spice of color and controversy to the gray wastelands of big-party consensus. But yesterday, Turkish President Suleyman Demirel tasked Erbakan with forming a new government. The general elections may have been inconclusive, but the RP nonetheless won 158 seats in the 550-member parliament, putting it at least power-by-coalition within its grasp.

Erbakan has toned down his rhetoric since the election to an extent that almost amounts to a U-turn. In many ways this is more unsettling than if he had remained consistent. Israelis in particular are heartily sick of counterfeited Middle Eastern democrats who say one thing and practice the opposite. Neither will Europeans be impressed by Erbakan's sudden switch from advocating "Islamic NATO and EU" to a pledge to honor old alliances and forge ahead with a European customs union. They may be forgiven for wondering if the ancient Trojan Horse is being reincarnated for re-export back to Europe.

For Israel, any drift to the fundamentalist camp in Turkey is going to be very serious indeed. Israel has had great faith in the "Turkish model" for the future Middle East and has invested huge diplomatic efforts in helping the concept spread to the southern republics of the former Soviet Union. While the world adopts a "wait and see" attitude to what happens next, one thing is clear — Israel's relations with the European Union are becoming of paramount importance. In a boiling sea of resurgent Islam, Israel and the Europeans are going to find themselves in the same boat more quickly than they may yet apprehend.

The Primakov appointment

IT is probably safe to assume that replacing Andrei Kozyrev with Yevgeny Primakov as Russia's minister for foreign affairs will not drastically change Moscow's foreign policies; at least not immediately. With the notable exception of Shimon Peres, who as foreign minister had greater impact on Israel's course than anyone else in government, foreign ministers do not usually play a decisive role in shaping policies. And under Boris Yeltsin's quasi-authoritarian government this may be truer than elsewhere.

But Yeltsin's choice undoubtedly reflects on Russia's direction. That the Western-oriented Kozyrev has been replaced by a former KGB operative who is now head of Russia's intelligence services and the country's most prominent expert on the Middle East indicates a change in emphasis if not yet in orientation.

To say that Russia's standing in the Middle East is not what it used to be, and that the Arab dictatorships have lost their Soviet umbrella is to state the obvious. Mostly, the change is a function of the Soviet Union's economic collapse. Now dependent on Western help in its effort to become competitive on the world market, Moscow cannot afford to antagonize the West with hostile feints in this region, nor can it arm backward dictatorial regimes like Syria on credit. Even more important, the collapse of totalitarianism and the new government's need to heed popular sentiment has made costly and dangerous military adventures virtually unthinkable.

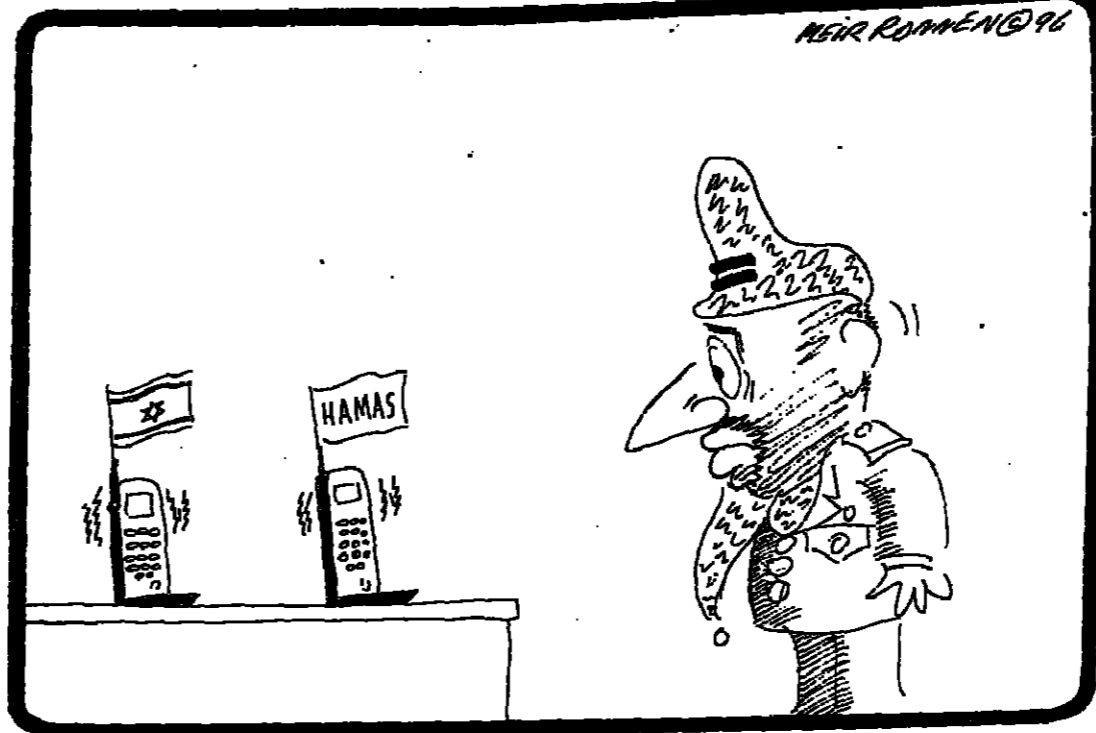
But the Russian economy has improved dramatically, its military industries have remained productive and innovative, and its vast arsenals

of conventional and non-conventional weapons are intact. Nor has Moscow truly abandoned its involvement in the region: It openly supplies weapons and nuclear help to Iran, and has clandestine dealings with Iraq and Libya.

From Russia's viewpoint such involvement is eminently justified. Moscow is not unreasonably concerned by the continued successes of Islamic fundamentalism — of which the election results in Turkey are only the latest example — and its effect on the Asian Moslem republics and the Moslem minorities in Russia. And it may also be worried about Washington's effort to establish a Pax Americana in the region, with almost no Russian participation.

In trying to expand Russian influence Primakov's experience, talent and skill will undoubtedly prove useful. Having first established connections in the Middle East as a journalist in the employ of the KGB, he developed working relationships with Arab leaders when the USSR was their patron, and with Israelis he met secretly after the Soviets severed diplomatic relations. That he represents Russia's concern about its standing in the Arab world rather than its Western orientation became obvious when he tried, against US interests, to forestall the Gulf War by negotiating with Saddam Hussein.

More than anything, his appointment signals Russia's attempt to return to the regional arena as a major power. It is an arena the Russians believe has undergone no fundamental transformation since the Czarist regimes tried to penetrate it, and which is still a "backyard" of vital importance to Moscow. The weapons may have changed, but the struggle between the big powers for spheres of influence is the same.



Arafat's big mistake

MOSHE ZAK

YASSER Arafat could have saved Yitshak Ayyash's life. Ayyash would be alive today in an Israeli jail, had the Palestinian Authority handed the arch-terrorist over to Israel, as required in the Oslo agreements. He would have stood trial here for his crimes committed in Israel, and would have faced life imprisonment, at most.

During a meeting with Arafat, Yitzhak Rabin asked that Ayyash be extradited, but Arafat refused. The PA preferred to keep Ayyash as an option for applying additional terrorist pressure, unidentified with the PLO, to squeeze more concessions out of Israel.

Arafat violated the agreement, and is now accusing Israel of violating it by eliminating Ayyash. His supporters in Gaza and Israel even made the absurd claim that Israel infringed Palestinian sovereignty — which is non-existent.

The sovereignty issue has been left to the permanent-status negotiations. In the meantime, overall responsibility for security remains Israel's. The Palestinian police officers may call themselves generals, but not of any recognized army. As an unusual gesture, Israel allowed the PA to issue passports, but in the name of the PA, only, not of the "State of Palestine." The same goes for postage stamps.

Evading responsibility, Arafat denied that Ayyash had found asylum in the Gaza Strip. He tried to cover himself by telling Rabin a tall story, based on "Palestinian intelligence reports," that the terrorist acts attributed to Ayyash were actually the product of a conspiracy between Palestinian and Israeli extremists.

THOSE WHO eliminated Ayyash weren't after revenge for the doz-

ens of Israelis whose deaths he caused. No revenge can bring the victims back to life. The aim was to dismantle, or at least defuse, the time bomb ticking away in the Gaza Strip, and to remove a man who would set off more time bombs, booby-traps and murders. Arafat's refusal to extradite Ayyash left Israel with no choice but to act on its own initiative.

Self-rule isn't sovereignty

Arafat may care to remember the days when he launched terror from Jordanian, Syrian and Lebanese territory. Back then the IDF had no concern for the "inviolability of the cease-fire lines." It crossed those lines to attack the Palestinian terror organizations.

Israel then invoked paragraph 51 of the UN Charter in its self-defense; it can now certainly claim the same right in an area that is not under any recognized foreign sovereignty. In fact, it has more than the right: It is obliged to operate against terrorist bases in the territory it handed over to the PA, so long as the PA is unable or unwilling to do so.

Prime Minister Peres was right to grant Arafat's request that Ayyash's parents be allowed to travel from Samaria to Gaza for their son's funeral. But this humanitarian gesture must not be allowed to beget political gestures. On the contrary: We must guard against any spread of the mistaken

view that there is a sovereign Palestinian area. On this score, Arafat may have a surprise or two in store for us after the elections, or after the withdrawal from Hebron.

One possible scenario: In March, when Arafat is required to amend the clauses in the Palestinian Covenant calling for the destruction of Israel, he will play a trick. The Palestinian National Council will amend the anti-Israel clauses, as promised, while the PA announces that the Palestinian declaration of independence (passed in Algiers in 1988) applies to the territories under PA jurisdiction. In other words — a unilateral declaration of independence, without Israel being consulted.

At such a time Arafat will need the terrorist arm of Hamas to help him apply leverage to Israel, without his having to accept responsibility for its actions. Already this week Arafat has profited from Hamas's threats: In order to prevent terror attacks, Israel suspended the joint IDF-Palestinian patrols in Area B.

This has been Arafat's objective since Oslo 2. If the suspension of the joint patrols is permanent, Hamas will be able to take credit for extending exclusive Palestinian rule into additional areas.

Power struggles in Gaza cannot be allowed to camouflage the unwritten PLO-Hamas agreement on a temporary cease-fire until the PA gets all the territories.

Israel cannot agree to the maintaining of this reserve of terror, of which Ayyash was a leading representative. If the PA refuses to extradite those who have attacked Israel and its citizens, Israel will have to go and get them.

The writer, a veteran journalist, comments on current affairs.

Vision isn't all

ALOUPH HAREVEN

DURING the country's first four decades, central government dominated local government activities. In the past few years this trend has been reversed; local government is now being accorded increasing authority.

This raises the question of the effectiveness of municipal management and development. And what kind of training do municipal leaders receive?

Oddly enough, there was no framework in Israel for training mayors in office. They were largely left to their own devices.

The change came in 1993, when the Meyerhoff Fund in Baltimore approached Sikkuy, the Association for the Advancement of Equal Opportunity, and proposed that a forum of mayors be set up.

Thus the Lyn P. Meyerhoff 21st-Century Forum of Mayors was launched. To date, it includes 80 Jewish and Arab heads of local authorities.

The forum is currently managed by Sikkuy, the Joint Distribution Committee/Elka, and the Interior Ministry. Its chief purpose is to prompt new thinking among mayors toward the 21st century, and to discuss how visions can be implemented through effective municipal management, planning, and public leadership.

The forum meets four times a year, for two days on each occasion, in a mainly workshop setting. Guided by experts from different fields, the mayors are given an opportunity to discuss their work and anticipate problems. Vision is clearly necessary; but for implementation on the

Jewish and Arab mayors were in sore need of a forum to air their problems. Now they have one

ground, a nuts-and-bolts approach is vital.

WHAT IS the most important issue facing mayors today? The mayors determined it was education.

Here, the key questions are: What kind of profile will a school graduate in the 21st century have? And in what ways can mayors influence this profile?

Something that has emerged from these workshops is the mayors' deep concern about the difficulty of effecting change in education. It has become apparent that any effective change at the school level must involve a comprehensive, long-term process.

Jewish and Arab mayors have compared notes on experiences within their constituencies, and asked: How do we go about selecting our educational leaders, especially school principals?

Second in importance on the mayors' agenda is economic development, and here a major subject for exploration is the role mayors and municipalities can play in facilitating private enterprise.

Another problematic issue is the relationship between local and central government. This is often strained, owing to the limited government resources made available to local authorities, and the complex bureaucratic processes involved in getting local development plans approved.

So far, the mayors' forum has notched up success in three areas:

It has induced mayors to introduce future-oriented thinking into their municipalities, and translate it into effective planning.

The forum has become a peer group in which Jewish and Arab mayors can discuss shared issues and explore mutual assistance. The workshops have, in effect, created an informal network of contacts between Jewish mayors and their Arab counterparts.

Lastly, the forum serves as a shining example of cooperation between an American Jewish philanthropic organization, local volunteer nonprofit organizations, and government and municipal authorities.

By the year 2001, forum members will have to ask themselves this question: To what extent has each mayor been successful in getting his municipal vision for the 21st century under way?

The writer is co-director of Sikkuy, the Association for the Advancement of Equal Opportunity.

Their prisoners, our MiAs

JOSEPH LERNER

TODAY, when Israel is to release 800 out of a scheduled 1,130 Palestinian prisoners, those alert to the plight of Israel's missing soldiers are in despair.

In December 1993, when Yasser Arafat returned half of Zachary Baumel's dog tag to Yitzhak Rabin, he promised additional information on our MiAs. Rabin then said that any release of Palestinian security prisoners would depend on Arafat's providing such information.

Close Arafat advisor Dr. Ahmed Tibi, reported in *The Jerusalem Post*, said: "The chairman regards [the return of the tag] as a humanitarian act of the first order, and we are doing everything possible to help with this painful problem."

Later Rabin was emphatic: "There are approximately 9,000 Palestinians currently in prison... Before any releases are discussed, we are still awaiting the PLO's answer on the MiAs."

In the Cairo Agreement, on May 4, 1994, Arafat assured Israel of his cooperation in locating and returning Israeli MiAs.

Despite Rabin's repeatedly linking the release of Palestinian prisoners to receiving additional information on the MIA issue, his government went on to release prisoners without so much as mentioning linkage.

The public favors linkage. In an IMRA-sponsored poll on April 3-4, 1995, 69.1 percent of Israeli Jews favored linking prisoner release to getting further MIA information even if it would halt the peace process; 13.7 percent favored releasing prisoners without the information, and 17.2 percent didn't know.

Yet the government has proved deaf to public concerns. It hasn't reminded Arafat of his ob-

ligations under the agreement, or apologized to the nation for allowing the violations to occur.

SHIMON Peres's stance on Baumel was different. He declared that Arafat had no additional information about the MiAs. Israelis rejected Peres's assertion.

In an IMRA-sponsored poll on May 4, 1994, the results were: 50.3 percent felt Arafat was lying and Peres knew it; 22 percent felt Arafat was lying and Peres naive-

Rabin said, 'One of our painful problems has a name. It is made up of those two words: It'll be okay'

ly believed him; 10.1 percent thought Arafat wasn't lying; 17.6 percent didn't know.

Peres's standard glowing optimism doesn't appear to shine on the MIA issue. Asked about additional information promised by Arafat, Peres replied: "The Americans didn't get everyone back in Vietnam. Maybe we won't get everyone back either."

Peres's casual acceptance of Arafat's violation characterizes the government's refusal to require that the PLO meet its documented obligations. Thus the violations mount: Illegal Hamas and PLO militias continue. The Palestinian "police" force is far larger than was agreed upon: Israel even tacitly accepts Arafat being called "president." The growing list of Jerusalem-related viola-

tions ranges from the PLO-appointed mufti of Jerusalem to daily illegal Orient House activities.

Israel was told that "Gaza-Jericho First" would test PLO reliability. Instead, it became a test of the scale of violations Israel and the US would ignore.

The US Congress has instituted surveillance of PLO compliance with its peace-agreement commitments as a condition of continued financial assistance. The State Department has issued reports which are blind to PLO violations, and our government has enthusiastically supported these unreliable reports.

AIPAC was thoroughly denounced by Israeli officials for its objective report on the PLO. Americans, Jews and others who tally the actual record are characterized as right-wing minority troublemakers, even traitors who should be ostracized.

Israelis shouldn't complain about Arafat's failure to provide information on the MiAs, but about their government's failure to insist that the Palestinian Authority meet its obligations; and about our leaders looking away while provisions which were intended to safeguard Israel are being sacrificed to the "peace process."

Will it all work out? This is what Rabin said to the IDF's Staff and Command School in August 1992: "One of our painful problems has a name. A given name and a surname. It is the combination of the two words *yitshak ba'eder* [it'll be okay]. This combination... frequently heard in our daily life, is unbearable... It is devouring us."

The writer heads IMRA (Independent Media Review & Analysis)

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

TOO MUCH HASTE

Sir, — The haste with which public buildings, institutions and roads are being renamed after the late Yitzhak Rabin must be a cause for concern. The assassination of the prime minister shocked and upset the majority of citizens, cutting across party and religious lines. Even if an individual did not share Rabin's dream of a future Israel, he shared the sorrow and regrets that such a terrible crime could extinguish the spirit of a politician and soldier who had devoted himself to a lifetime of public service.

It is usual and desirable that public expressions of remembrance be

carefully considered and balanced. For these reasons, it would have been better if such expressions had been initiated no sooner than one year after Rabin's murder. This would give time for many people to offer their opinion as to the most suitable way of commemorating Rabin rather than rush to rename countless places which in many cases are totally unsuitable. The delay would also remove the not unfounded criticism that most manifestations of remembrance of the prime minister are political actions.

Petah Tikva.

DOUBLE STANDARD

Sir, — In your excellent editorial of December 20, "Songs and bullets," you describe the reaction of Prime Minister Peres to the violent cassette of Force 17 marketed by Israeli Arabs. Peres is quoted as saying: "There are those who sing and those who shoot. I concern myself with those who shoot." In response to the inciteful verses to murder all Zionists, overrun Haifa, Jerusalem et al. Yet when his fellow Jews call for civil disobedience to the actions of his minority government, they are indicted for sedition

and barbers are arrested for allowing a free exchange of ideas in their shops.

This discriminatory attitude in the treatments of Israeli Arabs and Israeli Jews is the height of racism. I am surprised that the attorneys for the 30 or so young men from Kiryat Arba, languishing in Israeli jails, have not petitioned the courts for their immediate release, based only on Peres's statement.

Jerusalem.

THE GALL OF THE SYRIANS

Sir, — To hurry is not the way of a gentleman. I am surprised that Prime Minister Peres, whom I consider to be a gentleman, is so eager to come to terms with the Syrians. President Assad, whom not even his friends would call a gentleman, is witty, secretive and above all, mortal. His successor may not be prepared — and also not constitutionally required — to abide by what will then be the predecessor's decision to make full peace with Israel.

Why should Israel seek peace with Syria when the other side makes impossible demands and preconditions to even negotiations? Cannot both sides live with the situation as is and leave the whole question to be settled by another generation?

Having started two wars against Israel and lost both, the Syrians have every reason to approach the victor with deference and not with arrogant requests. If they don't see it that way — well, cannot we wait until they do? Peace with Syria? It would be nice but unnecessary even from the point of view of the visionary who sees a pacified Middle East by the year 2000.

Jerusalem.

وكان من الترحيل

C'mon auntie, let the tomboy be!

PARENTING
RUTH MASON

HOW do I get my child's aunts and uncles to get off my tomboy daughter's back when they make her feel inadequate when the "face parade" goes by at family gatherings and she's in her sneakers?

Debby Porten, family therapist, Shiluv Institute for Marriage and Family Therapy, replies:

There are no magic formulas here. Trying to change the behavior of an elderly great-aunt might be a complete exercise in futility. But if your relatives are the types that can hear you, I would tell them very directly that this is the way my daughter dresses, she feels very good in these clothes and it's fine with me and I would appreciate it if you would not make hurtful remarks about it. You can add that they might not be aware that she's sensitive to their remarks and it hurts her feelings.

I was feeling very pressured the other day and I lost my temper at my five-year-old. It wasn't his fault and I felt bad and wanted to apologize. How do I do that in away that's appropriate and meaningful? How much should I share about what's going on with me in that situation?

Debby Porten replies: When you feel you've done something to your child that he didn't deserve and that was related to your own anger or tension, it's always appropriate to tell him you're sorry. You won't lose stature in the eyes of your child. Quite the opposite: the child can appreciate the apology. Children understand the concept at a very early age. Even two-year-olds know to say "I'm sorry" to each



other when they've done something hurtful.

In the circumstances you describe, an apology is actually helpful to your child because it helps him to understand what happened. It can be confusing for children when a parent gets angry at them and they can't figure out why.

You asked about how much of your own feelings to share: the less the better. You can just say that you were angry or tense or upset and that it had nothing to do with him. Children are not there to share our problems and issues. For that, we have our

spouses and friends. Children cannot understand adult problems and will just feel burdened by them.

And remember - children get angry and say nasty things and know that parents also lose their tempers sometimes. We're all human, and it's not the end of the world to get angry inappropriately at our kids. An apology, however, acts as a healing salve on the hurt feelings we may have inadvertently caused.

If you have a question about parenting, write to: Parenting, POB 81, 91000 Jerusalem.

Times are tough for WUJS

The organization that represents Jewish students worldwide is trying to redefine its goals, Tom Gross reports

WHEN Albert Einstein, then a lecturer at Berlin University, and a clutch of other academics and students founded the World Union of Jewish Students in 1924, the issues before them were clear: rising antisemitism on European campuses and the increased use of quotas limiting the admission of Jews to some universities.

In the 1970s, this activism was revived by WUJS on behalf of Soviet Jews. When Natan Sharansky was released in 1986, at his first public appearance he thanked "you, the Jewish students," who helped ensure that the world did not forget his plight and that of other refuseniks.

But this week WUJS is having to talk about new challenges during its triennial conference at Kibbutz Ma'aleh Hahamisha, near Jerusalem. "It's necessary to work out a new common approach among ourselves," said new WUJS chairman Claude Kandiyoti.

Although antisemitism still exists on some campuses, the end of the Cold War and the advent of the peace process have for the most part removed the external threats that defined WUJS's role.

Unlike many international organizations disoriented by the shift in world political circumstances of recent years, WUJS's energetic and enthusiastic new leadership is disarmingly honest about the problems it's run into.

"In the last three years, we've lacked leadership, lacked direction and lacked new projects," says Turkish-born Kandiyoti, 23, whose organization, through local affiliates, represents hundreds of thousands of Jewish students worldwide.

"As long as there were Jews in danger, there was no question as to why students and young people should feel that being Jewish was important to them," he says.

As if this loss of direction in the early '90s wasn't enough for Kandiyoti to deal with, there are lingering problems arising out of severe mismanagement - some say corruption - under the previous leadership that saw the union come close to collapse.

In 1994, accusations of financial impropriety prompted the

Jewish Agency, which provides about half WUJS's \$500,000 annual budget, to order an inquiry into union activities. Two successive chairmen later resigned.

At the beginning of this week's conference it was clear that the results of those troubled times were still in evidence, as the National Union of Israeli Students (NUIS) - representing 120,000 members - announced it was leaving WUJS.

NUIS international secretary Efty Rifkin, 32, said his group had become "increasingly dismayed that WUJS has lost direction over the last three years."

"Obviously, the split is a big disappointment, and we will be

doing our utmost to make them reconsider their decision," said Kandiyoti.

"The real root of the problem is that NUIS has a completely different agenda than local Jewish student unions, which are promoting Jewish minority issues within a wider society," says Arieh Doobov, 26, WUJS's new comptroller. "NUIS is concerned with national Israeli issues, lobbying for increased funding and housing for students."

As WUJS leaders are all too aware, most Israeli Jewish students are not interested in what Diaspora Jewish activists term "Jewish issues."

"I've never heard of WUJS."

said Hila, a third-year law student at the Hebrew University. "These student unions are usually just an outlet for self-important waffle.... Anyway, I don't see the need for a specifically Jewish union."

One of WUJS's main new programs has been to put Hebrew University students in touch with thousands of Jewish students from around the world who come on one-year programs here. "The Diaspora youth here live in a bubble," says Doobov. "They may have a good time while they are here, but they are isolated. They don't integrate with Israeli society at all, or really understand what Israel is."

"At the same time we want to make Israelis more aware and respectful of their Jewish past and peers in the Diaspora. Hopefully, the two groups can enrich each other," he says.

Despite the controversy with NUIS, Kandiyoti says he is upbeat about the organization's future. This year's gathering is one of its biggest ever, with 450 delegates attending from 39 countries, including states which have not been represented before, such as India, Guatemala, Ecuador and Bosnia.

However, Kandiyoti added that the challenges before WUJS were great. "The fact that it was a student who murdered his fellow Jew, Yitzhak Rabin, shows that there is a crisis in Jewish education," he asserted.

Kandiyoti also said WUJS's priorities today were to prevent assimilation, "to promote Jewish education by creating resources, convincing Jewish communities to develop their youth and feel comfortable with their Jewishness, as well as encouraging them to learn Hebrew and spend time in Israel through our educational program in Arad."

Kandiyoti also pointed out that it was a mark of confidence in WUJS that several leading Israeli politicians had agreed to address the week-long conference, including President Ezer Weizman, ministers Yossi Beilin and Rabbi Yehuda Amital, Jewish Agency head Avraham Burg, Likud MK Benny Begin and Jerusalem Mayor Ehud Olmert.

Israeli students say no to Germany

IN explaining their decision to leave the World Union of Jewish Students this week, the National Union of Israeli Students (NUIS) cited, among other matters, the WUJS decision to endorse their European branch's holding of a summer university last September in Germany.

WUJS comptroller Arieh Doobov says, "It comes down to their belief that Jews should not live in Germany and our position that Jews can live where they want."

"It was a good thing that the university was held in Germany," said Mark Klingler of the German Union of Jewish Students. "Jewish life is being revived there by the day," Klingler, 21, from Dusseldorf, is here this week with 10 fellow German students for the conference.

Although the Jewish population is in decline throughout most of the Diaspora, Germany is one of the exceptions. It has one of the fastest-growing Jewish communities in the world. The community officially numbers 52,000, but an estimated 30,000 other Jews live there, including up to 10,000 from Israel.

"I understand Jewish friends of mine abroad who don't want to visit Germany," says Klingler, whose parents moved to Germany from Romania in 1965, "but we exist. Germany is an important country, and I don't think there is more antisemitism here today than elsewhere."

Next week, President Ezer Weizman is to visit Germany where he will be the first Israeli head of state to address a joint session of the Bundestag.

However, Weizman went out of his way when he addressed the WUJS conference this week to ask if there were German students in the audience. He then littered his speech with repeated remarks and asides about them the tone of which many delegates said verged on "racism."

"I couldn't live in Germany as a Jew," he added, "but you can live there till the cows come home if you want." T.G.

Be it as hero or invader, Che's legend lives on

HIS guerrilla movement ended in failure and death. The revolution he tried to spread is in shambles. The ideology that moved him has virtually collapsed around the world.

But three decades later, his myth refuses to die.

Che Guevara, the Argentine-born doctor-turned-guerrilla, is the subject of admiration and controversy in Bolivia, where his life came to an end and where his remains are being sought.

Guevara fought alongside Fidel Castro in the guerrilla war that led to the 1959 Communist revolution in Cuba. He became that country's deputy leader until he went to Bolivia and spread the revolution.

There he met with defeat and death.

The recent search for his bones has revived interest in Guevara, who died in 1967, when he and dozens of followers were captured and executed by Bolivian soldiers.

The government ordered the search after two retired army generals said they knew where he was buried.

The digging under the local airstrip in Vallegrande, a town of 6,000 people 690km. from the

capital La Paz, produced the bones of three men, none of them Guevara's. It also triggered a revival of the legend and controversy that have surrounded Guevara for decades.

Residents of Vallegrande have mixed feelings about the guerrilla leader who once drew international attention to their farming community.

Some consider him a hero, a champion for the poor. Others think of him as a foreign invader in the wrong place at the wrong time.

Emeterio Osinaga, a 62-year-old peasant, said Guevara arrived at a time when most peasants in Bolivia owned land thanks to a 1953 agrarian reform.

"Guevara had nothing to offer to Bolivian farmers," he said. The local Indian population re-

jected Guevara's alien accent, his odd looks with long hair and beard, his rumpled clothing and his ragtag guerrilla gang.

Osinaga recalled listening to Guevara and his followers promise "a new world without poverty" and to their requests for help.

"But what could they offer to us, if they were in even worse shape than we were?" Osinaga asked.

SINCE his death, however, many in Vallegrande have turned Guevara into a saintly figure whom they ask for favors.

Rene Hein, the town's Roman Catholic priest, said peasants often pay to have him celebrate Mass for Guevara. Hein said the requests have become more frequent since the search for the guerrilla's remains started

in November. Some residents refer to the nearby La Higuera village, where Guevara was killed, as Santo Ernesto de la Higuera. Some light candles below a framed photograph of Guevara taken from old newspapers, said Hernan Cortez, deputy mayor of Vallegrande.

Several times during the two weeks of digging for Guevara's body, local farmers lit signs with burning wood in the surrounding hills. "Che lives," the signs read.

President Gonzalo Sanchez de Lozada has pledged that if the guerrilla's remains are found, they will be given to his family. But Vallegrande residents protest, saying they want to establish a Che Guevara museum with the remains, the weapons, the clothing and the diaries of the guerrillas and the soldiers who fought them.

Cortez said "the Guevara myth" grew after the rebel was killed. While he was active in the area, the peasants followed his operations with fear, Cortez said, because of military propaganda and the dead soldiers brought to their village.

Military officials are unhappy with the resurgence of the Guevara legend, not because they fear a new guerrilla movement,

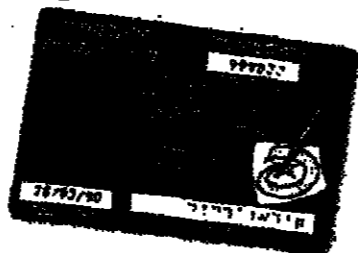


Major Ernesto 'Che' Guevara mans a radio transmitter during the Cuban Revolution in 1959. (AFP)

but because they feel it belittles their role in putting down what they see as Communist aggression against Bolivia. When students erected a Guevara monument near the school where he was killed, the military promptly removed it and destroyed it.

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BUSINESS & FINANCE

WEDNESDAY, JANUARY 10, 1996

Rates lowered on Israel Bonds

MARILYN HENRY
NEW YORK

ONE month after Israel's unprecedented bond issue on Wall Street, the Finance Ministry and the Development Corporation for Israel (Israel Bonds) lowered interest rates on Israel Bonds and set a lower target for 1996 Bonds sales.

Israel Bonds expects to raise up to \$850 million this year, the organization announced in New York on Monday. Last year's total was \$935 million, which was down from \$999m. in 1994.

The Finance Ministry said in a statement that the lower interest rate was linked to the country's improved financial situation.

Last month the government raised \$250m. in the American financial market with so-called "Yankee bonds." The sale, which was oversubscribed, was Israel's first public offering on Wall Street that was not backed by a US government guarantee.

However, in a statement of support for Israel Bonds, Finance Minister Avraham Shohat said "Israel should not give up an important source of income, one that is not dependent on economic and political fluctuations in the Middle East and the international capital market."

The interest rate for the floating rate bond will drop from the American prime rate minus 0.75 percent to prime minus 1.5%, but no more than 8%. The "economic development" bond, with a fixed rate, will be 0.70%, down from 0.75%.

Notes for a period of seven years, based on Libor, will drop from Libor plus 1% to Libor plus 0.80% (today 6.30%). These notes are available to any buyer, but tend to be purchased by banks.

In New York, Israel Bonds president Nathan Sharony said the organization wants to expand the number of buyers and will focus on smaller denominations at lower interest rates, rather than on sales to banks and financial institutions.

He did not think the reduced interest rate would affect sales, saying the rate was "reasonable" in the current market.

The number of bond buyers rose about 5% in the last year, Sharony said. "This in itself is a positive trend," he said. "I am



Shohat: No reason to give up this source of income, one that isn't dependent on economic and political fluctuations.

not concerned about being able to raise the money. We are broadening the base."

Israel Bonds sales were not hurt by the success of the Yankee bonds, Sharony said. "That was a small offering," he said, adding that "these are sold to customers who are not my customers."

Sharony said the goal of \$850m. was set by the government, within the limits of allowable debt. Israel Bonds represents a bit more than 30% of the outstanding debt of the government.

Israel Bonds, which has raised \$14 billion since 1951, has historically been pitched to Jewish communities with emotional appeals to state-building and immigrant absorption.

While they are seen as valuable for fostering ties between Israel and diaspora communities, they are only one vehicle through which the government can raise money.

Further, Sharony relies on a sales force of thousands of lay volunteers whose product must compete against increasingly sophisticated financial instruments.

The 1994 sales were split virtually evenly between bonds and notes. Last year, however, bonds accounted for 60% of sales.

The decrease in total sales was linked to a decline in European sales of notes, which were \$222m. in 1994, against \$72m. in 1995.

Sharony said the 1994 figure was due to a major sale to a consortium of banks. With sales to banks now limited, he said, "we cannot repeat this kind of sale."

Central bank wants to ease foreign currency controls

Frenkel: Hopes Treasury will okay plan soon

EVELYN GORDON
and Jerusalem Post Staff

THE Bank of Israel will shortly introduce new measures to ease foreign currency controls, central bank Governor Jacob Frenkel told the Knesset Finance Committee yesterday.

Frenkel said he hoped the new measures will be okayed by the Treasury and brought to the Finance Committee for approval "in the very near future."

However, he said it will not be possible to completely eliminate currency controls until inflation here has fallen to Western levels.

Banking sources said the reforms are likely to be introduced "within weeks" and will pertain not only to the business sector but also to institutional investors and households and include more deregulation of overseas investing.

However, they added, the shekel's exchange mechanism will not be reformed in the near future.

Frenkel praised the Treasury's plan to cut NIS1.3 billion from ministry budgets to free up funds for items such as the health system crisis without increasing the deficit.

However, he strongly implied that the plan would not lead to either interest rate cuts or a devaluation.

"The Treasury's plan is intended to return the deficit to its planned level [of 2.5%]," he said. "Our monetary policy is already set in accordance with this planned level."

Furthermore, he said, the economy is overheated. Over the last three years, cumulative growth has been about 25%, while the number of employees has risen 23% and per capita GNP has increased 20%.

"This is a very, very fast rate



Central bank Governor Jacob Frenkel and Knesset Finance Committee chairman Gedalya Gal at the meeting yesterday. (Issac Harari)

[of growth], he said. "This means we have an active, vibrant - and, in my opinion, overheated - economy."

The problem is not just the rate of growth, he continued, but the fact that it has been funded by a huge growth in the balance of payments deficit, which reached \$4.2b. in 1995.

This represents a debt which will have to be paid someday, he warned.

Healthy growth, Frenkel stressed, can only be funded by an increase in savings, but Israel's savings rate has declined steadily.

In 1995, for the first time in years, private savings increased slightly, he said, but this was canceled out by a steep drop in public savings, as evidenced by the fact that the budget deficit increased for the first time in several years.

"If fiscal restraint increases,

then we will be able to permit ourselves less monetary restraint," he said.

Committee chairman Gedalya Gal (Labor) opened the meeting by protesting the fact that the budget contains almost NIS 10b. for subsidizing employers' payments to the National Insurance Institute.

This is "a great deal of money," he said, and a multi-year plan to gradually reduce these subsidies should be introduced.

However, Frenkel vigorously opposed this idea, saying NII payments by employers are a tax on employment which should be reduced in order to improve business profitability and encourage companies to hire new workers.

"Is this the time to impose a tax on the employment of workers?" he asked. "This makes no sense! In my opinion, we cannot reduce [the subsidy] at this time."

Motorola reports 19.2% rise in revenues

RACHEL NEIMAN

MOTOROLA (Israel) yesterday reported a 19.2 percent rise in revenues last year to \$770 million from \$646m. in 1994.

Only 50% of Telephone revenues were factored into Motorola (Israel)'s annual report. Telephone is owned jointly by Motorola (Israel) and Bezeq.

"In practical terms Motorola (Israel) is the second largest communications company in Israel after Bezeq," said CEO Hanan Ahsaf. "The company today serves one-half million clients in various wireless communications."

Ahsaf said Motorola (Israel) hopes to pass the \$1 billion mark in revenues within two years.

During the past year, Ahsaf said "Motorola continued building and expanding within the local market. [We] expanded the MIRS advanced wireless digital

network for organization. "Together with Bezeq [we] invested \$160m. in widening Israel's cellular communications infrastructure," he said.

Subsidiary Motorola Semiconductor (Israel) enlarged its Herzliya development center.

Last year Motorola (Israel) was involved in setting up a wireless data base for United Parcel Service in Europe and in adapting MIRS equipment to the Japanese and European markets.

Exports rose only 10% to \$233m. from \$210m. in 1994.

The reason was a continuing erosion of profits, the result of higher wages for skilled workers and a prolonged dollar-shekel exchange rate freeze, Ahsaf said.

The company, which employs 3,150 workers, posted \$245,000 in per-worker output as compared with \$194,000 in 1994.

Beeper companies want to charge callers for leaving message

JUDY SIEGEL

THE Communications Ministry is coming under pressure from the various beeper companies to allow the charging of up to NIS 2.50 to callers who leave messages, so firms can significantly reduce the cost of purchasing or leasing beepers.

The beeper firm would have a special prefix number, 058.

"I don't believe it's a good idea, but I won't prevent it," ministry director-general Shlomo Waxe told *The Jerusalem Post*. "It would only be an option for customers, but not mandatory for all beepers available. In any

case," he added, "this arrangement exists in a number of countries, including the US."

The beeper companies insist that lowering the price of the messaging devices would greatly increase their sales and profits. However, forcing those who leave messages to pay a fee - in addition to regular Bezeq phone units for contacting the beeper office - could discourage many people from leaving messages.

"The arrangement would first have to go through the Knesset

Finance Committee," Waxe explained.

"If it were approved, it would start only experimentally, for nine months, and we would require the beeper companies to launch a massive publicity campaign to explain the system."

Meanwhile, Waxe told Consumer Protection Authority director-general Yossi Sa-Ness that cellular phone service will never reach the quality of regular phone service.

He said Telephone and Cellcom are meeting all conditions of their licenses.

Abjac Mazal's Hula permit extended

RACHEL NEIMAN

OIL exploration partnership Abjac Mazal announced yesterday its Hula Valley permit has been extended until 2025.

The 30-year permit is the longest time limit issued here. Abjac has obligated itself to

conduct seismic surveys covering 30 square kilometers and up to 500 meters deep. Abjac said these surveys will be completed by the end of the year.

Abjac must execute nine sample drillings at the Gonen, Neot Mordechai and Nutra sites at depths of between 150 to 200 meters.

Five will be executed this year and four in 1997.

EU expected to give go-ahead for SAS/Lufthansa alliance soon

BRUSSELS (Reuters) - The European Commission is expected to give the go-ahead this month, but on a number of conditions, to a strategic alliance between Scandinavian Airlines Systems (SAS) and Germany's Lufthansa, an EU source said yesterday.

A decision was expected at the regular commission meeting next week or the following week, the source said.

"Then the commission will approve it," the source said, without giving details of the conditions that would be attached to the approval.

Clearance would be no surprise, as European Competition Commissioner Karel Van Miert said Lufthansa and SAS had accepted the EU's demands.

The *Finansavisningen* daily said the demands agreed by the two airlines included maintaining flight frequencies on certain key routes for five years, giving up some slots between Scandinavia and Germany to would-be competitors, signing interline agreements with competitors and enabling competitors to take part in joint customer loyalty programs.

Lufthansa and SAS, which is jointly owned by the governments of Sweden, Denmark and Norway and by private investors, announced the strategic alliance in May. It involves creation of a joint venture to operate scheduled flights between Germany and Scandinavia.

In August the commission said they must make room for other airlines on routes linking Germany and Scandinavia if they wanted its approval for their alliance.

In a notice published in the EU's official journal, the commission also said Lufthansa must end its link with Finnair on routes between Scandinavia and Germany.

SAS and Lufthansa have said the alliance would bring huge savings to both airlines and industry analysts believe it makes good sense for both airlines as competition heats up.

BUSINESS BRIEFS

Court decides not to repossess Shapiras' properties: The Tel Aviv District Court yesterday decided not to repossess properties owned by the Shapira family, former owners of Carmel Carpets. Because this was a case of respected people, the court said, it was enough to issue a statement forbidding the family from carrying out any business transactions concerning its properties until the case against it is settled.

A suit was filed in June by Carmel Carpets' liquidators, charging that the family had illegally used company assets for personal purposes, including the purchase of a Caesarea villa. Carmel Carpets has been sold to Beitli owner Ofer Eitan.

Rachel Neiman

Cotton growers planning to plant more this year: Much needed rain has raised expectations among cotton growers, who intend to plant 20 percent more than last year, the Cotton Growers board announced yesterday. Despite the fact that cotton is primarily grown using treated waste water irrigation, farmers still rely on a certain percentage of rainwater.

This year, 300,000 dunam will be seeded, compared with 250,000 in 1995. The first half of the planting season is in March-April, but the harvest is already being sold at a high rate. Expected turnover for this year's cotton harvest is NIS 400 million. Last season was a record bumper crop of between 500 kilograms per dunam (for Pima) and 550 kg. per dunam (for Acala). Over 70% of Israel's cotton crop goes to export.

Rachel Neiman

DA undecided on prosecuting Promedico

RACHEL NEIMAN

NO final decision has been made by the District Attorney's Office whether to prosecute Teva subsidiary Promedico on tax evasion charges.

Globes mistakenly reported yesterday that charges had been filed, and its headline said Teva CEO Eli Hurvitz was indicted on conspiracy and concealment of \$20 million in back taxes.

Hurvitz was chairman of Promedico between 1981 and 1986.

If filed, the charges will be against Promedico itself and owners Benjamin Jesselson and Alexander Eisenberg, as well as Hurvitz.

Teva sold Promedico in 1987. The erroneous announcement took the company by surprise, a Teva spokeswoman said.

Teva yesterday released a sum-

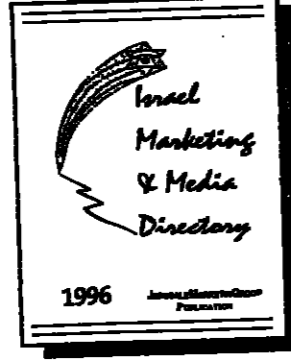
mary of the world pharmaceutical industry by brokerage Furman Selz, which named Teva (and Watson Pharmaceuticals) as having turned in "spectacular stock performances, with the same expected for 1996."

"It is expected that by the end of 1996, Copaxone - the new drug for multiple sclerosis - will have been launched worldwide and that earnings per share growth will go up from the current rate of about 20%."

Copaxone alone could generate EPS in 1998 of \$2.50, Furman Selz said, adding "there is little premium in the stock at current prices," but worldwide approval [for the drug] will change this."

Price targets of more than \$60 this year were predicted.

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Pound sterling (£100,000)	4.500	4.500	4.500	4.500
German mark (DM 200,000)	2.250	2.125	2.000	2.125
Swiss franc (SF 200,000)	0.250	0.250	0.250	0.250
Yen (10 million yen)				
Shekel Foreign Exchange Rates* (2.1.96)				
Currency basket	BUY	SELL	BUY	SELL
U.S. dollar	3.558	3.589	3.05	3.120
German mark	2.1494	2.181	2.11	2.165
Pound sterling	4.9102	4.937	4.72	4.84
French franc	0.8273	0.8376	0.81	0.82
Japanese yen (100)	2.9488	2.999	2.89	2.974
Dutch guilder	1.8115	1.845	1.83	1.859
Swiss franc	2.9522	2.991	2.81	2.879
Swedish krona	0.4686	0.4772	0.46	0.471
Denmark krone	0.4678	0.4755	0.47	0.51
Norwegian krona	0.559	0.5646	0.54	0.58
Finnish mark	0.7119	0.7228	0.68	0.74
Canadian dollar	2.2785	2.3153	2.23	2.280
Australian dollar	2.3735	2.3939	2.27	2.320
S. African rand	0.8547	0.8695	0.77	0.822
Belgian franc (10)	1.0482	1.0611	1.02	1.059
Austrian schilling (10)	3.0547	3.1042	3.00	3.078
Italian lire (100,000)	1.3788	1.4052	1.36	1.392
Jordanian dinar			4.26	4.348
Egyptian pound			0.86	0.918
EUU	3.8940	4.0266		4.0266
Irish punt	4.8628	5.0225	4.86	5.11
Spanish peseta (100)	2.5539	2.5972	2.51	2.576

مركزنا للأخبار

CRITIC'S CHOICE

OPERA

HELEN KAYE
KHOVANSCHINA was Mussorgsky's last work before he died in 1881, but (like Boris Gudonov) he never finished it.



Valery Gergiev is on the podium, as the New Israeli Opera presents Mussorgsky's 'Khovanshina'.

DANCE

MICHAEL AJZENSTADT
THERE is a lot of activity this week at the Suzanne Dellal Center in Tel Aviv.

CLASSICAL MUSIC

MICHAEL AJZENSTADT
AVNER Biron leads his Israel Camerata Rehovot in two cantatas by Bach (BWV 56 and BWV 213).

certo with the Israel Philharmonic Orchestra under the baton of Jeffrey Tate, who also leads the orchestra in an overture by Elgar and in Dvorak's rarely performed fifth symphony.

TELEVISION

RUTH KERN

NYPD Blue, which was floundering at the end of last season, has really lost it in the first episode of the new year.

TELEVISION

CHANNEL 1

6:30 News in Arabic 6:45 Physical Fitness 7:00 Good Morning Israel

CHANNEL 2

12:30 Yaron's Studio 12:30 Yaron London talks to children 14:00 Star Trek - the next generation

CHANNEL 3

10:30 Beautiful Dreamers (1992) (pt) 12:25 Find the Lady (1978) - slapstick comedy starring John Candy

JORDAN TV

14:00 Inspector Gadget - cartoon 14:30 Ghost Writer 15:00 Bill Nye the Science Guy

WHERE TO GO

Conducted Tours HERBERT. Tours of the Mount Scopus campus, in English, daily Sun-Thur, 11 a.m. from Bronman Reception Centre.

TELAIV

HERBERT MUSEUM OF ART. Eight in November - Gillsberg, Gross, Reisman, Shelenyuk, Almog, Baratz, Gal, Davidi, Dyck and his Agape/Peter Brandler

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QUICK CROSSWORD

Quick crossword puzzle with clues: 1. Giant hunter (5), 4. Layering (7), 8. Chest of drawers (7), 9. Interrogate (5), 10. Smithy (5), 11. Wrote music (7), 12. Banned pudding (4), 13. Windward island (5), 14. Spirit (6), 15. Kian (4), 16. Banned cocktail (5), 17. Spillover (5), 18. Underlying (5), 19. Adorable (7), 20. Hugged (7), 21. Airy (5).



CRYPTIC CROSSWORD

Cryptic crossword puzzle with clues: 1. Form a touching relationship? (4,4,7), 9. It's another thing to stop out at this place of entertainment (9), 10. As if nothing had changed in the capital (5), 11. In court drunk in strait-jacket (7), 12. The girl's suit reportedly is shaggy (7), 13. I leave after the end of the game (3), 14. Penguin ruler? (7), 17. Token that's much below the actual value (7), 19. Fool party a comedian (7), 22. Entraps another part of the horse's foot (7), 24. Some fellows get short measure (3), 26. Broker more certain to be available first (7).

Large crossword puzzle grid with numbers 1-30.

Quick crossword puzzle with clues: 1. Not having a chance (3,2,2), 2. Bled (anag) (5), 3. Most illustrations (7), 4. Irrasome (6), 5. Grass disease (5), 6. Sansless (7), 7. The (5), 12. Oh dear! (4), 14. Assistant (4), 16. Jostled (7), 18. Writicle (7), 19. Cleverest (7), 21. Muddled (6), 22. Underlying (5), 23. Staunch (5), 25. Remove listening devices (5).

Yesterday's Quick Solution: Across: 1. Giant hunter (5) - Hercules, 4. Layering (7) - strata, 8. Chest of drawers (7) - chest, 9. Interrogate (5) - question, 10. Smithy (5) - forge, 11. Wrote music (7) - composer, 12. Banned pudding (4) - blancmange, 13. Windward island (5) - upwind, 14. Spirit (6) - ghost, 15. Kian (4) - name, 16. Banned cocktail (5) - martini, 17. Spillover (5) - overflow, 18. Underlying (5) - basic, 19. Adorable (7) - lovely, 20. Hugged (7) - embraced, 21. Airy (5) - breezy.

House Committee postpones lifting Yehezkel's immunity

THE Knesset House Committee failed to reach a decision yesterday on lifting the political immunity of MK Avi Yehezkel (Labor) to face fraud charges related to the Histadrut scandal.

The decision will be made only after all the material relating to the Histadrut affair has been made available to his lawyer.

At the outset of the emotional discussion, Attorney-General Michael Ben-Yair noted that it was the fourth time he had asked the committee to lift an MK's immunity to face criminal charges.

MK Avraham Poraz (Meretz) asked the discussion be postponed so Yehezkel could participate in the primary elections in March.

"It's a crying shame to ask to lift his immunity at the height of

LIAT COLLINS

the primary election campaign. It's not fair to judge him twice," Poraz said.

MK Michael Eitan (Likud) accused Poraz of "being scared of what he will reveal."

Committee chairman Elie Goldschmidt accused Eitan of trying to make political capital out of the case.

Yehezkel asked for a fair chance to clear his name.

"For 18 months my blood has been spilled. I heard I had stolen NIS 3 million.

"What hasn't been said about me?"

"And in the end the whole charge sheet is based on the word of a state's witness who says I didn't pay NIS 16,000."

His lawyer, Amnon Zichroni,

said he needed to receive all the evidence, including material relating to other former Histadrut officials under investigation.

Ben-Yair said it would be a mistake to postpone the discussion on the grounds that it could affect the primary election process.

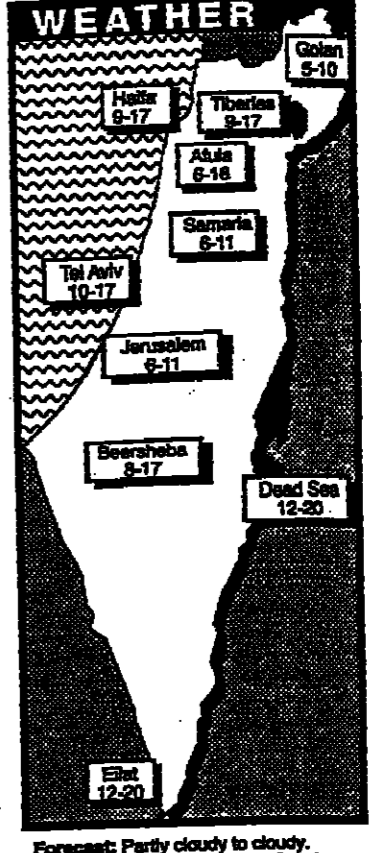
"This would be seen as mixing politics and law," said the attorney-general.

Goldschmidt initiated a compromise by which the discussion will be resumed only after all the evidence has been submitted to Yehezkel.

This includes another 12 files, namely those relating to Transport Minister Yisrael Kessar, Deputy Industry and Trade Minister Masha Lubelsky, and former Histadrut secretary-general Haim Haberfeld.



Prime Minister Shimon Peres shares the honors of laying the cornerstone of the Trans-Israel Highway's Ben-Shemen interchange yesterday, flanked by (left) Housing and Construction Minister Binyamin Ben-Eliezer and Finance Minister Avraham Shohat. (Ilan Oseendryer/Israel Sun)



Forecast: Partly cloudy to cloudy. Drop in temperature. Possibility of rain in the east and in the south, this afternoon.

AROUND THE WORLD			
	LOW	HIGH	
	C	F	C
Alexander	03	37	08
Berlin	05	41	08
Bombay	25	77	31
Chicago	07	45	31
Copenhagen	01	34	28
Helsinki	01	34	28
London	05	41	08
Los Angeles	12	54	28
Manila	25	77	31
Paris	05	41	08
San Francisco	05	41	08
Tel Aviv	10	50	17
Yokohama	12	54	28

Pandemonium upsets work on bill implementing Oslo accord

A SPECIAL joint committee created yesterday afternoon to prepare the bill on the interim agreement with the Palestinians for second and third readings - scheduled to be held today - broke up last night.

At one point the head of the committee, Foreign Affairs and Defense Committee chairman Haggai Merom (Labor), ordered ushers to remove Likud MKs by force when they refused to leave quietly.

The committee comprises eight MKs from the Knesset Foreign Affairs and Defense Committee and the Knesset Law Committee.

Three are Labor MKs; two from Meretz; two from Likud; and one from the National Religious Party.

MK Michael Eitan (Likud), who was temporarily replacing faction chairman Moshe Katsav,

LIAT COLLINS

said he was not informed of a Knesset House Committee decision on who should be appointed to the special committee.

When "Filibuster King" Eitan and party colleagues Tzahi Hanegbi and Ron Nahman arrived for the first gathering of the committee, Merom told them that only Nahman could remain. Merom's reasoning was that the committee should be split equally between members of the two main committees, whereas the three Likud MKs are all members of the Law Committee only.

The Likud had decided Nahman and Hanegbi would be members, and Eitan would replace either of them in their absence. In this way, they hoped to be able to drag out the committee meeting with a marathon debate.

The coalition is trying to pay back the Likud for its unsuccessful attempt at delaying the first reading of the bill on Monday by calling it a no-confidence motion.

The coalition wants to ensure that the bill passes before the Palestinian elections, scheduled for January 20.

"We won't be just a token opposition," said Eitan. "They want the whole thing to pass in 30 minutes. I say we have the right to shout a hundred times from the Knesset plenum that the status of Jerusalem is in danger.

"All the rules of the game were broken. They're pretending to pass legislation as if it's a democratic country but at the same time saying only the ruling power will decide who can speak and legislate." Hanegbi called the move "Bolshevik" and "anti-democratic."

Trans-Israel Highway construction begins

THE first cornerstone of the Trans-Israel Highway was laid yesterday at the Ben-Shemen interchange with the participation of Prime Minister Shimon Peres, Housing Minister Binyamin Ben-Eliezer, and Finance Minister Avraham Shohat, but opposition to the planned 300-kilometer artery has remained vocal.

As the ceremony was taking place, a plane flew overhead carrying a message to stop the highway from the Society for the Protection of Nature in Israel (SPNI).

Dozens of protesters, strengthened by calls from Interior Minister Haim Ramon, Environment Minister Yossi Sarid and Minister Yossi Beilin to reconsider the highway, stood nearby with placards calling for the development of public transport instead of the highway.

Protests also came from residents of communities along the

modest highway.

The Technion expert pointed out that the building of additional highways did not necessarily ease traffic.

In the Western world, it was often found that more roads only intensified congestion.

Mahalel said that no study had been made of how the highway would affect land use along its route or how it would affect the environment.

He expressed fear Israel would enter into the cycle common to many American cities in which suburbanization led to increased dependence on cars.

This dependence in turn led to more traffic problems and to the deterioration of public transport.

He added that there was no reason why the reevaluation could not take place for each section of the highway at the same time as routine planning work was being carried out.

route of the planned highway who say the road will affect their quality of life.

The residents also object to the compensation offered to them for expropriated land.

Meanwhile Prof. David Mahalel of the Technion's Transportation Research Institute has questioned the highway's ability to reduce traffic jams and has called for reevaluating the entire project.

In a letter to SPNI chairman Yoav Sagie, Mahalel said that such as regional plans, encouragement of public transport, and environmental policy were constantly evolving.

Mahalel also said that in a project of this scope it was necessary to examine alternative proposals such as development of other transport, upgrading of existing roads, or the building of a more

Winning numbers and cards

In yesterday's Mifal Hapayis draw, the winning numbers were 48, 32, 28, 27, 17, and 11. The additional number was 24.

In the daily Chance card draw, the lucky cards were seven of spades, king of hearts, queen of diamonds and jack of clubs.

Survey shows Arab vote swings left

A SURVEY conducted by Haifa University into voting trends among Israeli Arabs has revealed a marked drop in support for right-wing parties and a dramatic rise in support for the Labor Party and the left-wing bloc.

The survey, by Prof. Sammy Smooha and doctoral student Asaad Ghanem, was conducted in September and October 1995 among 1,200 eligible voters representing a cross section of non-Jewish citizens.

Smooha said that 95% of those interviewed had replied that they would vote for Labor, left-wing and Arab parties.

"Only 5% said they would vote for the Likud, or smaller right-wing or religious parties which is an appreciable change to what happened in the 1992 elections when these parties, altogether, received 22% of the Arab vote," said Smooha.

"It is such a big drop that if this was reflected in the actual vote it would constitute a collapse in support by Arab citizens for right-wing parties," Smooha said. 76% of those interviewed said they would vote in the next Knesset elections, compared with 70% in the 1992 ballot. "This is important because this would bring the voter turnout among Arab citizens to almost the same level as the Jewish vote [in percentage terms]," he said.

The poll revealed that the majority of Arab voters would prefer to see a united Arab list, that would include Ahmed Tibi, Abdul Wahab Darawshe's Democratic Arab Party, and independent groups, rather than separate lists.

In such an event, the poll found that 37% would vote for a united Arab list, 31% for Labor, 19% for Hadash, 9% for Meretz and 4% for Likud, right-wing and religious parties.

Smooha stressed that separate Tibi and Darawshe lists would prevent either of them from entering the Knesset. A united list, according to the findings, would ensure the election of four Arab MKs.

Interministerial committee to deal with non-Orthodox on religious councils

A NEW interministerial committee will discuss admitting Conservative and Reform Jews to religious councils, as the High Court of Appeals ruled last week. The decision to establish the committee arose during a meeting yesterday between Prime Minister Shimon Peres and the religious Knesset factions.

Justice Minister David Liba'i will head the new committee, which will also include Interior Minister Haim Ramon, Religious Affairs Minister Shimon Shetret, Minister-without-Portfolio Yehuda Amital and Education Minister Amnon Rubinstein.

Peres already established one interministerial committee to deal with the High Court decision

LIAT COLLINS

two months ago, which left it for the Knesset to decide whether Reform and Conservative conversions would be recognized for the purposes of the civil Population Registry.

Last week the High Court ruled that Reform and Conservative Jews must be allowed to sit on religious councils.

Religious parties expressed concern at the decision, and asked for an early meeting with Peres to discuss it.

"We said we would preserve the [religious] status quo and we will preserve it. This has always been our stand. We're against splitting the country," Peres said yesterday.

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NEWS IN BRIEF

Criteria for youth group funding to change
The Education Ministry is working on changing its criteria for funding youth groups, so that Arab groups will be able to obtain funding, the ministry said yesterday in response to a complaint by the Association for Civil Rights in Israel. The new criteria will require loyalty to the state and adherence to democratic values and the principles of the Declaration of Independence, instead of "identification with the Jewish people [and] the Zionist movement" and promotion of the importance of army service. Evelyn Gordon

Ministers to consider Biram, Ikrit
The ministerial committee on Ikrit and Biram will review the situation to see if it is possible to allow more descendants of the former residents to return to the villages. The committee's original recommendation had been to allow only two descendants of each home owner to return, due to limited space, but the villagers vehemently oppose this restriction. Evelyn Gordon

Main suspect in couple's murder has flown
The main suspect in the murder of a Haifa couple on Yom Kippur Eve was a tourist who fled the country shortly afterward, sources said yesterday. The couple, Rita and Mladen Boskavitch, 68 and 66, immigrated from Sarajevo in 1992. A suspect in connection with the case, Shmuel Kostanian, 46, was remanded yesterday until Sunday. He is suspected of aiding the tourist, whom Kostanian said was a relative staying in his house. However, he said he knew nothing about the murder, apparently committed during a robbery. Iim

Ski season opens on Mt. Hermon
The ski season is to open today on Mt. Hermon. General manager of the ski site Eli Sagron said the 70 cm of snow that had accumulated following last week's snowfall is enough to open upper slopes for skiing, and there is sufficient snow on the intermediate and lower slopes for visitors to enjoy other attractions, including tobogganing. David Rudge

Army told to justify policy on 'Ha'aretz'
The High Court of Justice yesterday gave the army 30 days to justify its alleged discrimination against Ha'aretz's military reporters. According to a petition filed by the paper, the army has refused to grant Ha'aretz reporters interviews or invite them to press conferences and tours, because it does not like the paper's policy on reporting army casualties. Evelyn Gordon

Doctor's license suspended
The medical license of Prof. Albert Bartal, formerly a surgeon at Tel Aviv's Ichilov Hospital, was suspended yesterday for five years by Health Minister Ephraim Sneh. The unusually severe punishment was handed down to Bartal for taking under-the-table payments from patients for performing surgery at Ichilov. In 1991, Bartal was convicted and sentenced to nine months in prison and a NIS 30,000 fine. Sneh said the five-year license suspension, one of the most severe administrative punishments given to a physician in recent years, expressed the seriousness in which he regards the phenomenon of "black" medicine. Judy Siegel

THREE DAYS OF DISCUSSION DOWN AT THE DEAD SEA

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